

# Risca Primary School

## Spring Term Newsletter No 4

Monday 11th January 2021

Dear Mums and Dads,

By now you will all know that the Education Minister has given updated information for all schools. From now on, schools are to be brought in line with the Welsh Covid 3 week review cycle. We have now been made aware that schools will be providing online learning for pupils at least until the end of January, and that unless Covid infection rates fall significantly, online learning will continue until February half term. In the meantime, school will provide 'in school' learning for those pupils of critical workers only.

You will all be aware that teachers are now setting lessons for all children via See-Saw in video format. These lessons will be uploaded by 9 am every morning, and children can access the lessons throughout the day. I know that teachers are really pleased with the work produced last week, and have thoroughly enjoyed seeing all of the children's endeavours. **Well done to class 5B for having the highest level of engagement in our lessons. Mrs Bosley is really pleased with your efforts. Keep it up!**

Given that we are now aware that pupils are going to be accessing blended learning for at least the next three weeks and maybe longer, we are really eager to work with you to enable your child to access their home learning. With that in mind, I have asked Mrs Wilmore to contact you over the next few days if your child has not yet accessed the learning, to see if there is anything that we can do to support you. Additionally, teachers will be telephoning over the next two weeks to chat to you and your child about home learning and progress made. Look out for a message on See-Saw, for the expected date of your telephone call. We are looking forward to chatting with you.

Having spoken to teachers last week, they are really pleased with the work that they have received from the children. Teachers are currently working very hard to mark work in a timely manner and I know that they all mark work through the day. Just as a reminder we would not expect teachers to necessarily mark children's work throughout the evening. I am sure that you will understand that it is essential that teachers have time at the end of the day to switch off their laptops and prepare for the next day.

We are all now aware that there is significant concern that schools are contributing to the transmission of the virus within the community and therefore it is important that we do all we can to keep our community safe. Therefore, as a school we are attempting to strike the fine balance



of running our school effectively, whilst adhering to the Welsh Government guidance of supporting staff to work from home where possible. By doing this we hope to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus within the building, and between staff, and, in turn, prevent the risk of transmission back into the community.

I know that we would all also agree that by keeping staff and pupils well, we should be able to minimise any further disruption to pupil learning. To limit the possibility of community transmission school is currently running with a skeleton staff on site, with all staff having designated time to attend school and designated times to prepare and mark work from home. If you telephone school and you are unable to get an answer, our answerphone message gives clear instructions for contacting school, which includes e-mail and an alternative telephone number. Can I ask that messages come to school via e-mail where possible, as this allows us to prioritise our responses according to urgency. Many thanks.

We are currently processing our latest round of applications for critical worker provision. Please do not send your child to a Hub class if you have not had a telephone conversation with one of our members of staff. Your application will need to be further assessed in school and we will need to ascertain your needs. We are now in the position where I am unable to guarantee that pupils will be placed alongside their year group friends, as we must ensure that numbers in our Hub classes are well balanced. Also I would ask that applications are only made for provision if this is absolutely **essential**. Can I also remind all parents of pupils who are currently attending school, that the self-isolation procedures will still apply to pupils should there be a positive case in school. Therefore should there be a positive case in any of our Hub classes we will have to ask pupils and staff to self isolate for the required 10 day period.

I am sure that many of you will be aware that nationally, schools are finding it increasingly challenging to safely accommodate the numbers of pupils who are qualifying for critical worker places in schools. As a school we are continuing to receive applications for spaces and currently our capacity for additional provision is extremely stretched. Can I reiterate that as a school and staff we are absolutely committed to supporting key and critical worker children and I am aware that many of our parents work for the NHS and Emergency Services which themselves are stretched to capacity at the moment. However, we are also aware that as our number of onsite pupils increase, we in turn increase the chances of positive cases within school and increase the risk of Hub classes being sent home to self isolate. Indeed, already in our Borough we have heard of Hub classes closing due to positive cases. We are aware that for many parents this will be problematic and we want to do our best for all pupils and parents at this challenging time.

Can I thank all parents who have worked with us over the last week to limit the number of children in our classes by opting for part time provision where possible. This has been really helpful for us. Can I please ask that should you not need provision for a day and are able to keep children home, that you contact us, as this will help us to manage our numbers and hopefully reduce the risk of transmission and positive cases within school. Many thanks.

With that in mind should your child have a positive coronavirus test whilst in school please contact us as soon as possible, via See-Saw. E-mail or telephone in order that we can start self isolation procedures immediately, and where possible limit any potential transmission, Many thanks.

Once again can I thank you for your patience and understanding, and thank all of you who have worked with us over the last week to ensure that our first week of January was as smooth as possible. Don't forget we are still at the end of a telephone or e-mail, please get in touch with us should you need any advice or support,

Many thanks

Mrs Arthur and Staff.