

# LEYBOURNE SS PETER & PAUL C E PRIMARY ACADEMY

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5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to Term 3 - it is certainly not what we were expecting or hoping for. I have no doubt you will have been upset and concerned by the latest Government announcement, for many reasons. The situation has obviously moved on from when I wrote to you last week, and it has now been confirmed that we will not reopen for the majority of pupils this term. If all goes well with the roll out of the vaccination programme, we can perhaps hope to return to school, and a semblance of a “normal” life, after the February half term break.

In the meantime, we shall be continuing with the remote learning programme we have introduced today. Thank you all for your patience as we introduce this new way of working. I am sure there will be glitches and teething problems; we are all adapting and learning together at this time. Staff spent a good deal of their Christmas break planning and preparing for the possibility of remote provision and Miss Harrison has been outstanding in her training and support of our staff, whilst also setting up the whole school on Teams, and preparing work for her own class. My heartfelt thanks go to Miss Harrison and the rest of the staff for all of their hard work.

I realise that it may be frustrating for you, and your children, when things don't run smoothly. Please do bear with us, we are doing the very best we can, but we are not all ICT whizzes! If you have issues joining the live sessions, accessing or returning the work, or if you have any queries about the way the remote learning is working, please do use the class email to contact your child's class teacher. The messaging option on the Teams platform is for the *children* to use. Teachers will be checking their emails at least once a day between 8:45am and 3:15 pm, Monday to Friday, and will do their very best to respond to you during this time. Please do remember that there are up to 32 children in a class so it would be very easy for a teacher to spend all day replying to emails if everyone sent them in, rather than actually teaching the children! Please do not expect an instant response, or complain if it takes some time. Teachers have a huge amount to do during this time -they may well be engaged with recording other lessons, responding to pupils, delivering live sessions or planning future learning when you email – so please do bear with them if they do not reply immediately. The lack of an instant response does not mean that they are not working, it simply means they are busy doing something else for the benefit of your children. Teachers genuinely want to help and support you, as well as the children, at this time, but they might initially struggle to deal with everyone!

Please also be aware that office staff are unlikely to be able to help with your queries about Teams and remote learning, not because they don't want to, but simply because they might not

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know about the work that has been set for each class, and will not have access to the teachers, who may well be working from home. Thank you.

We hope that your children enjoyed seeing their teachers today. The teachers enjoyed seeing the children, and their work! Please do make sure that your child is ready to log on at the start of the lesson. Live sessions are only 30 minutes, so it is important that all children attend for the whole session. Please be aware that if your child misses the start of the session, the teacher will not be able to go back over the content that has been missed. Teachers will endeavour to record the live sessions, so they can be accessed independently later, but please do not rely on this!

I know that some of you would prefer hard copies of the home learning activities, and, as someone who much prefers paper to the computer, I really do sympathise. At the moment, however, all of our efforts have to focus on the provision of the online learning, and we simply do not have the capacity to provide both. Printing hard copies is extremely time consuming (especially as we have reduced staff available and in school at this time) and also expensive, and we unfortunately had huge numbers of packs left uncollected during the last lockdown. This may, in part, have been due to the risk of infection, as people perhaps did not want to travel to collect resources from school or have extra materials in their homes. Online learning allows us to monitor pupil engagement and to respond to children in a much more timely and effective manner. If your child is unable to edit the work set online, please do encourage them to write their answers and then either upload a photo of it to Teams, or send it to the teacher via the class email. We will continue to monitor this situation and will endeavour to help you if we can.

Obviously, the live sessions take place across the course of the morning, rather than all at the very beginning of the day, and some of you may be unsure as to what your child could or should do before the lessons begin. Please remember that your child should be reading for approximately 30 minutes each day. They should also be practising their spellings, handwriting and times tables (including using TT Rockstars), and, for Key Stage 1, their phonics, each day. These activities can take place at any time during the day.

Engagement with this new way of working is extremely important. We will be working in this way for a whole term – one sixth of the year. We will be monitoring pupils' attendance carefully during the live sessions, and monitoring the submission of their tasks. It is important that pupils attend the live lessons unless they have a valid reason for not doing so. Therefore, if your child is ill, and/or unable to engage with the live sessions or work set for them, for any reason, *please do let us know*. Please continue to notify the school office of any illness, especially if it is COVID-19, as we are still responsible for monitoring pupils' attendance and also the spread of the COVID-19 infection. Thank you.

I shall write to you again in the coming days with a further update. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or concerns at this time, we will do all we can to help. I am sure that the pressures felt by many today will ease as we settle into this new way of learning and working, but, for now, well done on surviving the first day of remote learning! I hope you all have a lovely evening!

Best wishes

Tina Holditch  
Headteacher