



Email Message dated: 07.01.2021

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you to offer further clarification about our Home/Remote Learning offer following Gavin Williamson's recent statement in parliament and subsequent DfE guidance which was received at 7.30pm last night.

As you know we have developed our Home Learning offer for this lockdown using feedback from parents following our last period of remote learning and keeping to the strict guidance afforded to us by the DfE. Our aim is to attempt to build on the sense of connection between school and home and to reduce the risk of the children losing what they have learnt in the last term.

However, here are a few things to bear in mind...

1. The first and most important outcome of this situation is that we all survive (physically and mentally) this pandemic!
2. Most of the children caught up most of their missed learning last term - so we can catch them up again. At Rackham, we found that most of our pupils made rapid progress after their return to school in September and any gaps in their learning were quickly closed. We anticipate the same happening again when pupils are next permitted into school as normal. Do not become over-anxious about missed in-school learning.
3. There is more to child development than academic attainment and improving one's knowledge.

These statements are not an excuse for us not to continue supporting children's learning during school closures, they are just some points to consider. We need to strike a balance for us all.

Our remote learning is there to support you and your children to learn at home whilst our country attempts to control the spread of the new virus strain. If you do not log on to every zoom meeting, your child is not enjoying them, or they do not fit with your work/home learning schedule then please do not worry. If you need the children to engage in BBC lessons for a day or so, or work on Purple Mash or you all need to go for a walk during the day then that is absolutely fine. In our opinion, it is probably better use of time - particularly if trying to stick to a rigid timetable and log on to zoom sessions each time is causing you and your children additional anxiety.

Our children are resilient, and I feel confident that once they return to normality at Rackham, we will all be surprised by their ability to bounce back after setbacks like this. If you explain something incorrectly, it will not affect them forever. When we are all back together again physically, we will work with your children and help them catch up again. Please do not think that any gaps in learning will not be addressed and closed upon your children's return to school. We understand that for many families, the ability to support your child with remote learning as much as you might like to be able to is beyond your control and we will support ALL pupils to ensure rapid progress can happen.

We want to do everything we can to avoid any further spread of the virus. Our Government have taken the necessary decision to switch to remote learning for a very real reason and one which we cannot ignore in our efforts to protect our children from difficult learning experiences at home.

I attach an important letter from Jonathan Lewis, our Service Director for Education where our message about the importance of keeping pupils at home when you are able is reiterated. Please note the paragraph:

*"Please think carefully before sending your children back to school.*

*We need to ensure that the number of children and young people accessing the offer of provision in a school or college is kept to the lowest number possible, so that we can reduce household mixing and the risk of spreading coronavirus. As a result, schools will have a limit on the number of children they can safely support in their bubble arrangements. Therefore, even if you are a critical worker, if your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, then they should. Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role."*

You will have noticed the recent advice regarding digital learning resources and at Rackham we are very mindful of those families where devices are not readily available. Unfortunately, the Government have not allocated us any laptops for digitally vulnerable pupils at this time and realistically, we do not anticipate this happening any time soon.

We attach a link to a form and ask that all parents complete this to help gain a better understanding of where additional support might be required. Please fill in this form as soon as possible, ideally before the end of today, Thursday 7th January. Please only fill in one per family.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Pd4-cbwFekeUPvAe4nFjFncn8yhHGhLjErzKnfeLXJUNkpNMU9BT1Q0QU5QVIVOQVhNNVFUOU9MTS4u>

Thank you all once again for your patience and cooperation. We are doing our very best to support you all as best we can, but it is difficult for us when we are learning about Government decisions at the same time as you are.

Kind regards,

Bridget Harrison