



30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I have the pleasure of opening this letter by sharing some good news with our parent community. Mrs. Ward, our Deputy Head who leads on Teaching, Learning and Curriculum now has a beautiful baby daughter! Mrs. Ward gave birth earlier than expected which meant she was unable to return to work in September, but she is making the most of having time with her young family before returning to Rackham next year.

Many of you will remember Mrs. Ward for her enormous efforts coordinating our remote learning last year which I would once again like to thank her for. As the number of Covid-19 cases rise across the nation, we will return to remote learning in the event of a bubble or school closure to ensure our children's education can continue. This letter explains the preparation measures that have been put in place.

When we evaluated the remote learning that was available during school closure last academic year, it was fantastic to learn that the vast majority of parents were very happy with the provision available. Pupil engagement levels were significantly higher than that recorded at other primary schools nationally and our teachers were able to manage and sustain the workload. As such, we have made a deliberate decision not to change the learning platforms or procedures that have served us so well and that our staff and Year 1-6 parents are used to. In our reception class, we will use Tapestry for remote learning which parents should already be familiar with as this is currently used for weekly homework and sharing your child's achievements from school.

### **What happens if we have a positive case of Covid-19?**

In the event of a positive case in school of either staff or pupil, those who are deemed close contacts will be asked to stay at home and isolate for two weeks. If your child is asked to isolate for two weeks, you do not need to get them tested unless they start to show symptoms. If you do need to organise a test, please let us know so that we can continue to follow the track and trace procedures within school. If the result is positive, please make us aware. Children will not be able to return to school until the two week isolation period is over so during this time, your child will undertake remote learning where your child's class teacher will set lessons, tasks and activities to be completed at home. Class teachers will be available for support via their class email. It is essential that your child completes the learning to the best of their ability because in these circumstances when pupils return to school, the teacher will hope to move forward with the next set of skills and knowledge. A huge amount of learning can take place over the course of two weeks so please do not consider the time as an additional holiday from school.

### **Parent responsibilities during remote learning**

#### **Provide support for your children by:**

- Establishing routines and expectations.
- Defining a space for your child to work in.
- Monitoring communications from teachers.
- Taking an active role in helping your children process their learning.

- Promoting physical activity and/or exercise.
- Checking in with your child regularly to help them manage stress.
- Monitoring how much time your child is spending online.
- Setting rules around their social media interactions.
- Communicating with school staff as needs arise.

### **Establishing routines and expectations**

From the first day, you will need to establish routines and expectations. Therefore, as was the case last academic year, we have provided parents with a suggested timetable for your children's learning which has been tailored to meet the developmental needs of Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 ages. These are designed to help you maintain a routine at home and establish ground rules for 'academic time'. Please use the timetable to set regular hours for schoolwork. This includes regular breaks for activity, eating and drinking. In the activity breaks, it is important that pupils get up and move around. Keep normal bedtime routines and try to maintain the usual routine for any older siblings who live in the same house.

It is important that you set these expectations as soon as remote learning is implemented, not several days later after it becomes apparent a child is struggling with the absence of routine.

### **Setting up a learning environment**

Try to create a quiet and comfortable learning space. Your child may have a regular place for doing homework under normal circumstances, but this may not be suitable for working for an extended period of time. A space/location for extended learning should be a public or family space, not in a bedroom. It should also have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible. Above all, it should be a space where you or another adult is present to monitor and support your children's learning.

### **Wellbeing**

Confinement at home for an extended period of time can cause stress and conflict. Tips for looking after your children during isolation include:

- Talking to your whole family about what is happening. Understanding the situation will reduce their anxiety.
- Help your children to think about how they have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure them that they will cope with this situation too. Remind them that the isolation won't last for long.
- Exercise regularly; This could include exercise DVDs, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the garden or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have it. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.
- Encourage your children to keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media (where appropriate).

### **Learning Platforms (Year 1-6)**

Parents will be sent passwords and logins for three sites which will be used during isolation to share work and undertake learning activities. Please keep these safe and if, for any reason your, logins do not work, please notify the class teacher via their class email address. The virtual learning sites we will use are:

- **Times Table Rock Stars** – online games to learn times tables. The system assesses where your child is and moves them up when they are achieving the required scores. They also get to move up through the 'Rock Star Ranks' and earn coins which can be used to purchase items for their Avatars. They are able to take part in online stadium battles as well as just competing against their own scores.

- **Purple Mash** is our online learning platform. The children use this in school for the delivery of their computing lessons. There are lots of educational games and activities to complete. Your child's class teacher may also set work to do via Purple Mash, this will be located in the '2do' section within the platform.
- **Seesaw** is our online learning journal. We use it to record practical work within school. KS1 and KS2 children have been given a 'home learning student sign in code' this enables them to access any work their teachers set and they can respond to it and the teacher is able to give feedback. It is an efficient way to send home videos demonstrating/modelling practical activities to support remote learning.

In the event of a bubble closure, a two week 'isolation' block of work will be available for children in the first instance. Work will be sent home via email and also shared on our school website. All teachers have spent time preparing work that is achievable, thoroughly explained and have supporting resources available.

In the event of a whole school closure that lasts longer than two weeks, teachers will be using their Seesaw accounts daily to upload recordings of their class book or demonstrative videos to support class work. Please ensure that you keep checking this area for help. We will also be updating the class areas of the school website with additions to work, extra help or sharing good examples. I will of course write to you again with further details if a bubble or the school needs to remain closed for longer than two weeks.

All teachers will regularly access their class email accounts which are for parent-teacher communication purposes. These email addresses are currently in use and will not change if a bubble is closed.

Please note these arrangements will only be put into action when a confirmed positive case leads to a bubble or whole school closure. Those individual children that are required to isolate while waiting for a test result should use resources on the Oak National Academy website found at <https://www.thenational.academy/>.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff at Rackham for the amazing efforts they are making to ensure calm continuity within school. I feel satisfied that we have prepared as much as we can for any eventuality moving forward and this is thanks to the hard work and efforts of our pupils and our staff.

It is important to note that whilst we are doing everything we possibly can to reduce the likelihood of a positive case within our school, the chances of this happening at some point are quite high. We at Rackham know how very lucky we are to have such a supportive parent community. To ensure key learning time in your child's education is not lost, a combined team effort of parents and teachers is required. It is therefore imperative that you support your child to complete the tasks set by their teachers so that they are not at a disadvantage upon return to school.

Lastly, thank you to all the parents and carers for your unwavering support at this time and for doing all you can to help keep our school and wider community safe.

Kind Regards,



Mrs B Harrison  
Headteacher

