



Tuesday Jan 5th 2021

Dear Parents

I feel a little bit like I am in Groundhog Day and I am sure many of you do too. I particularly want to start by thanking you for the various emails that we have received supporting the decisions we are making. We are all facing a new lockdown and we will work to make the learning online as creative and engaging as possible – for many you will be familiar with the process. As a parent of two children and as a headteacher I am already thinking about how to juggle life to cope with home technology needs, internet demands, supporting my children and keep work going. I am sure you are immediately thinking of the various challenges you will now face. Compromise, flexibility, calm and patience will be needed to make this work for such a long period of time. Taking time to breathe and take stock rather than panic is crucial in finding perspective until the vaccines and testing fully have impact.

As a school, we receive news at the same time as parents and we do need to take time to prepare for the situation. I also need to reiterate that we currently have a significant amount of staff unable to attend school at the present time. **With this in mind, I can confirm that all learning for this week will be online.**

For some families, you will want to know about key worker provision. Please do not email regarding this at the present time. Like the last lockdown, we will email out a Google Form to register your interest. In the same way, I would ask that you consider very carefully, whether your child should come to school. I quote Boris Johnson, who although saying schools were safe highlighted that

'... the new Covid-19 variant, which was first discovered in the country last month and is said to be 70 per cent more transmissible. Schools may "act as vectors of transmission, causing the virus to spread between households".

This has certainly been our experience based on the last week of Autumn term and the illness levels we have seen in staff and other children over Christmas and as we experience now.

It is our hope that we will begin Key/Critical Worker provision **on Monday 11th January** and that by then we will have collated the requests for provision. We aim to maintain key worker provision in bubbles so that we can minimise transmission and keep everyone safe. This does mean a high level of staff to support this and we will prioritise provision if necessary if there is a high demand. As a start, we are limiting provision to 15 children in a bubble.

Key worker provision will be the following:

4 bubbles (EYFS/Yr1-2/Y3-4/Y5-6) which will take place from 8:45 – 2:30pm. This allows online learning to take place and additional cleaning of the school. **Lunches will be booked online as normal.** If you have any problems or you are new to school and require support please email admin@stmarys-kl.cumbria.sch.uk or the class teacher. **Links are at the end of this letter.**

Our main focus will be online learning; however, we know resources can be limited. **As from Thursday 7th Jan, paper and books will be available to collect** from the main office at school should you need these to make learning easier.

Your children's health, welfare and education continue to be our main priority and I have been so impressed with our staff who have been preparing/cleaning school to welcome back our children. We all need to all play our part in reducing the rapidly escalating spread of the virus in our region and keep our families safe. I continue to emphasise the need to stick to the new rules.

We will keep in touch via email on a regular basis and do everything in our power to support our children with a high-quality learning experience. The lockdown and school closure is going to be until February half term, at least. As a result, we need to work together to ensure our children's mental and physical well being is supported as well as their academic education.

We await news regarding Free School Meals provision, however we will ensure that families are supported as quickly as possible. We will also be in touch with the Community Cupboard so please let us know if you need additional support.

The staff of St Mary's continue to impress me with their determination to provide online learning, key worker provision and juggle the challenges of family life. I hope as we face a return to lockdown we will continue to see the positive spirit that was evident in the last big lockdown. To keep children in contact with each other, I would encourage everyone to embrace the online learning which contributes to good mental well-being, as children keep in touch with staff and their friends learning together whilst isolated.

This term is normally full of exciting events such as cross country runs, spelling bee, competitions, RSPB bird watch, STEM activities etc. With this in mind we will weave these into the half term as best possible. We will also be encouraging children to send in photos each week to keep each other motivated.

I genuinely and wholeheartedly wish you all a Happy New Year and hope you remain safe and well.



Brian Jones

Headteacher

'Uncertainty is uncomfortable and this is also true: you can still inhale and exhale when things don't make sense to you.' As Danielle Coke says. 'I always want to come from a place of hope.'



Key Worker Request Forms –

Nursery and Reception

<https://forms.gle/H2WCiLCFmLzts9GYA>

Year 1 and 2

<https://forms.gle/4uBxxEfyad1Bo1fD6>

Year 3 and 4

<https://forms.gle/FfBcDAfNm3DGam397>

Year 5 and 6

<https://forms.gle/CmorYdPKzsFqXjCM7>