

Newsletter

Thursday 28th January 2021



Uffington
Church of England
Primary School

Dear Parents and Carers

Earlier this week, the Chair of Governors and I took the reluctant decision to close the school to all children in the interests of the safety of the children, and the members of staff who would need to travel to school to care for them. It was fortunate that online learning was already up and running but I am so pleased that you all took your children's teachers' advice and encouraged the children to enjoy the snow while it lasted. Many thanks to all those of you who sent in contributions to Mrs Lawson's wonderful 'Uffington Snow Montage' on Facebook!

Testing Programme for Staff working in Primary Schools

A new programme of home testing for staff has been implemented this week: staff carry out two rapid Lateral Flow Tests a week and report outcomes to NHS Test and Trace, as well as the school. Should anyone receive a positive test result, they must self-isolate immediately and seek a full PCR test.

Home Learning

The vast majority of children are engaging really well with their learning on a daily basis and we hope that you will agree that the development of live teaching in this second period of school closure has really changed the dynamics of home learning. We feel that both teaching staff and pupils benefit from the daily interaction over Google Classroom. Many thanks to all those of you who have sent messages of support – they are greatly appreciated!

We do understand that learning from home is hard work and, once again, I would like to remind you that, inevitably, some days will be better than others – some of your children will manage everything while others will only manage a little. We know that you are doing your best and just ask that you keep letting us know how everything is going: if there is a problem, we are here to help!

Parents' Evenings

We shall still hold our mid-year 'Parents Evenings' during the week commencing 8th February.

These, however, will take the form of daytime telephone discussions, which will take place between 0900 and 1630. Mrs Lawson will be in touch shortly with information about how to book a slot on Parentmail.

This round of consultations will focus upon how well your children are managing remote learning and their general well-being, although teachers will also talk to you about attainment and progress in English and Maths up to Christmas.

Well-being

Judging by all the super photographs that were sent in following last Friday's Creative Day, the children really enjoyed having the opportunity to do something different. It is always good for everyone to have something to look forward to in these challenging times, so you might like to know that the next Creative Day is scheduled for the last day of this half term, Friday 12th February.

If your child is struggling with mental health and well-being, I found a useful article which may be worth a read at <https://ssscpd.co.uk/education/parentsandguardians/child-mental-health-10-tips-for-parents>

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week and there are more resources at <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/parents-and-carers/>. Your child will be encouraged to engage in some of the activities by their class teachers as part of their home learning too.

Some very good news...

We know that most of our children have access to sufficient technology to engage with remote learning but that many families have to share devices. I am hugely grateful to school governor, Mrs Lisa Steele who made me aware that the BGL Group for whom she works, were launching a funding programme for schools. Schools were invited to bid for a grant of £2,500 to help families engage in home learning. I am pleased to say that our bid was successful; BGL had allocated sufficient funding for 112 schools but when 190 applied, decided to support all those who had bid for funding. Needless to say, we are thrilled to receive a grant of £1,500 which we will use to purchase further laptops which can be lent to families in need. It is likely that these will become available next month so please do let me know if you would like to be considered for an additional device.

Collective Worship

We have been delighted with the level of engagement in our weekly get-together for Merits on a Friday. We have been joined by children, parents, relations and friends and seeing all the smiling faces on screen is certainly a highlight of my week. We regularly have well over fifty participants on the call.

As we join together to say our school prayer, we say, *'Let us remember that as many hands build a house, so many hearts make a school'*, or in this case, *'...so many faces on a Zoom call make a school.'*

Fr Aran also leads worship on a Monday and numbers are increasing each week; you and your families and friends are most welcome to join us:

Topic: Collective Worship with Fr Aran

Time: Mondays at 2:45pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83942623494?pwd=dmtBRWRGVzZ1TEdkckhkZnNrQXJIUT09>

Meeting ID: 839 4262 3494

Passcode: 236012

Fr Aran will need a special act of worship for Candlemas at **2:45pm on Monday 1st February**. We would normally celebrate in church but will have a virtual celebration this year. All you need to join is the Zoom details above, a candle and something to light it with! Everyone welcome!

Please note that **Merits on Friday 29th January will be at the earlier time of 11:30am**.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72809608097?pwd=MHdPSjMxZlJudFRTdFdiV1VFOEEyUT09>

Meeting ID: 728 0960 8097

Passcode: Merits

Re-opening of Schools

I am sure that, like me, you listened with interest to the Prime Minister's statement on the re-opening of schools yesterday. Although the data seems to be slowly moving in the right direction, the national situation is still grave and we agree that children and staff are safer at home unless they must be in school for the time-being.

We understand that schools will be given two weeks' notice before re-opening, but it is helpful to have some idea of when children may be able to return to school. There is, of course, no guarantee that we will be able to open on 8th March, but we can work towards that date. In the meantime, we shall continue to do our best to support your children and you with our home learning package.

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As always, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who are working so hard, whether in school or at home, during these challenging times, and to all our governors whose support is greatly appreciated too.

With warmest wishes to you all,



Mrs HR Simms
Headteacher