



WILLOW LANE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

January 2021

Dates for your diaries

Dear Mums, Dads and Carers,

This newsletter focuses on home learning—the challenges it causes, the importance of it, tips to help families and a reminder that we are here to help and work with families.

As a parent, I know that home learning is challenging. In the MacKinnon household, as in yours, we are juggling home learning, working from home, working before and after children are in bed, managing the anxieties of family members' health and tag-teaming the challenges of parenting and keeping a house in order when our children really want to be with their friends in school. Sometimes we get the balance right and sometimes...we just need to accept that not everything can be done, ensure that everyone is happy and focus on the next day.

As a teacher, I know that it is vitally important that children carry on their learning whilst lockdown continues. Our approach (Seesaw videos and workbooks) focuses on key skills and knowledge that children should know in each year group. Our approach uses videos by teachers rather than live lessons so that families have flexibility about when to do learning. We also archive lessons at the end of each week so that if anything hasn't been completed it isn't worried about (by children or parents) and energy can focus on the new week.

I know that if children continue their daily English and Maths then they will be in the best position to carry on their learning when school re-opens. If they don't, the honest truth is that they may struggle to keep up and catch up. However, I do also want parents not to feel guilty if they can't do everything all of the time. If you find yourself in this position please focus on what you can from the core English and Maths learning and get in touch to see if we can help. Teaching works by taking small steps in learning day in day out and the workbooks and videos will support with this.

We recognise that these are difficult times and appreciate all the support you are giving your children. We are so impressed that each week over 2000 pieces of learning are being posted. Whatever support you can give your children with their learning is worth doing and we will keep encouraging it through texts, newsletters and facebook posts.

Finally, whilst all children aren't in school please remember that school is still here for all children. If we can help, talk things through, explain any learning or you need extra resources then please get in touch.

Yours, *Mr Mel MacKinnon*

SPRING TERM

Monday 15th February to
Friday 19th February: Half
Term

Monday 1st February to
Sunday 7th February:
Children's Mental Health
Week

Thursday 4th March: World
Book Day

Monday 8th March: Possible
date of re-opening.

Friday 26th March: School
closes at 2pm.

EASTER HOLIDAYS

Monday 12th April: Back to
School



Tree planting by our Year
1 bubble.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

As well as the videos, live class get-togethers and workbooks to support home learning, these are some of the things our teachers are doing and school can offer when you or your child are finding home learning a challenge.

- Phonecalls with parents.
- Phonecalls with children.
- Additional workbooks providing more challenge.
- Differentiated workbooks for children struggling.
- Personalised videos/messages of encouragement on Seesaw.
- Explaining key learning/concepts to parents.
- Adding videos of the maths methods used in class.
- Laptops from Lancaster City Council.
- iPad loans from school for families meeting specific criteria.
- Welfare visits to households.
- Additional learning resources eg paper & pencils.

If you would like support with home learning, please get in touch to see how we can help you. Teachers are timetabled to have time out of class to call and speak to families at home during the lockdown period.

SCHOOL RE-OPENING DATE

As a school, we want all children in as soon as we are told it is safe to do so. We know as much as you about when this might be at the moment. Last week, the Prime Minister announced that schools may start to re-open from Monday 8th March. We have been told that parents and schools will get two weeks notice of re-opening so we expect to hear further details on the 22nd February. We will inform you as soon as we have heard.

PARENT GOVERNOR

We were due to hold parent elections for governors at the start of term however this has been postponed by the current situation. We have looked at how we can do this and will be going ahead with this remotely. Information will be shared through T2P (our text to parents system) and on the school website in the near future. Please keep an eye out if you are interested in supporting the school with this role.

*You can keep up-to-date with dates, day to day learning and curriculum letters on our website:
www.willow.lancs.sch.uk*



iPads loaned from school for home learning.

TIPS for HOME LEARNING

In our communication with parents, the following tips and advice keep being shared by you.

- Establish a routine. Following a set pattern each day helps both children and adults.
- Display your routine. For younger children in particular it helps to tick things off as you go.
- Be realistic. Focus on what you can do and do that each day. Little and often is better for learning than a lot one day and none the next.
- In/Out tray. This is helpful in children knowing the expectations of them and encouraging them to complete work.
- Be organised. Having all home learning resources together in one place and tidying away afterwards helps.
- Exercise. This is important for adults and children to help not only physically but with sleep too.
- Television ('What?' I hear you say). The BBC Bitesize Lockdown Learning is a series of lessons on television every morning. We aren't suggesting watching it all but it is good quality and can help with a daily routine eg the 9am show to start the day.