

Bollington St. John's Church of England
Primary School



Where talent grows

Head Teacher: Mrs M. Walker

Head of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Mrs E. Watson

'Christian Value' – Thankfulness

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Colossians 3:17

8th January 2021

Dear families,

I hope that you are all well and this week has not been too difficult for you. I must admit it was an awful blow to hear the Prime Minister declare that schools were to move to remote learning, except for key worker and vulnerable children on Monday. With very little details and with less than twelve hours to prepare, schools and families were plunged into chaos, after successfully opening for just one day.

I am aware that for some of you the prospect of home learning for six weeks will not be an easy one. Please remember that we are here for you, and if you need any support or advice just email us. Thankfully we have Teams up and running for this lockdown, and so the remote provision we are offering is as close to a school day as is possible. Teachers have been thrilled with the numbers of children participating in the live lessons, and I do hope this continues so that the children's education and wellbeing is impacted as little as possible. Attending the live lessons will also give the children a chance to see their classmates and talk to their teacher, which is invaluable in these unsettling and difficult times. As I mentioned, please contact us if you have any difficulty accessing the remote learning as we will be monitoring attendance.

Key Workers and Vulnerable Children

Thank you to all the families who have completed their requests for key worker/vulnerable provision next week. Also thank you to parents for only sending their children into school on the days they require, following the government guidance which states, 'Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.' We will be operating two bubbles from Monday, and infant and a junior one. For the majority of the day children will be in their usual classrooms accessing the remote lessons that children at home are accessing. We have decided not to stagger the day, but ask that you maintain social distancing in the yard both before and after school, and continue to wear face masks.

Primary Assessments

Following on from the government's announcement on Monday the Department for Education has confirmed that there will be no statutory tests or primary assessments in 2021. This means there will be no Year 6 SATs, Year 1 phonics screening tests or Year 4 multiplication tests. The Year 2 assessments had already been cancelled.

Laptops for Disadvantaged Children

The government is providing laptops to schools to loan to disadvantaged children during the duration of the lockdown. Schools will be emailed and told when they can apply for the devices, starting with schools in the most deprived areas. We will probably not be invited to apply before January 15th. Our school has been allocated five laptops.

Data Scheme

Schools, trusts and local authorities can request mobile data increases for children and young people who:

- Do not have fixed broadband at home
- Cannot afford additional data for their devices
- Are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

Please email admin@stjohnsboll.cheshire.sch.uk if you would like us to apply for this on your behalf. For more information please see <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/about-increasing-mobile-data>

Xbox and PlayStation

An Xbox or PlayStation can be used to access remote learning. If you would like more details on how to do this please contact the office.

Will Things Change?

I honestly do not know if the government will make any further recommendations or guidance changes. The number of daily coronavirus cases and deaths is extremely worrying, the new variant is around 50-70% more transmissible and the NHS is close to being overwhelmed. The vaccine is a light at the end of the tunnel, but there are still difficult weeks ahead. Health experts agree that the new strain increases the R rate by around 0.5. During the March lockdown the efforts of the country reduced the R rate to 0.6. Even if we did exactly as we did in March we would struggle to get the R rate below 1 with the new variant, and this lockdown is not as stringent as the last. So the landscape may change because it may become necessary to do so, to save lives and protect the NHS.

Finally, can I thank all the parents who have taken the time to email and say how delighted you are with the remote learning and live lessons. We appreciate this so very much. As you can imagine it is not an easy time for teachers, managing children in school and delivering remote lessons, and so your support means the world. I would also love to see some pictures of the children working at home. It would be lovely to post any photos you send me onto the gallery page of our website.

This time will pass and hopefully very soon this chapter in all our lives will be over. Until then know that you are always in my thoughts and prayers. Thank you for your continued support.

With the warmest of wishes,

Mrs Walker.

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