

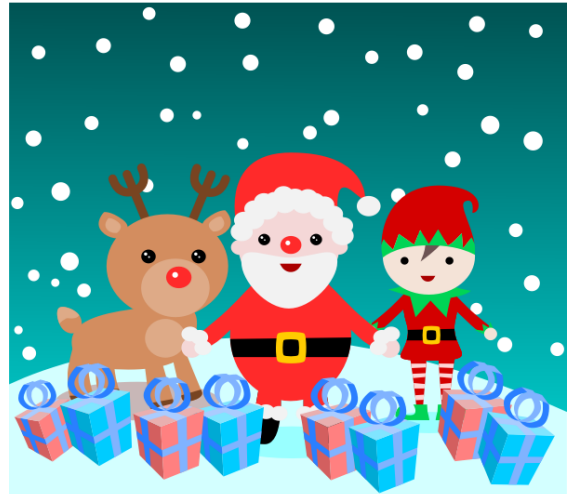
# Risca Primary School

## Autumn Newsletter No 10

Monday 7th December 2020

Dear Mums and Dads,

As you know we continue to work with Caerphilly County Borough Council, in the run up to Christmas in order to keep everyone safe and well. We are continuously in touch with Officers from the Council to ensure that we have the latest up to date information upon which we can make decisions. We are very aware that there has continued to be a rise in the number of positive cases of Covid 19 among children and adults across the Borough and many of our young children within the Borough have experienced some disruption in their learning. You will also know that presently we have one class receiving blended learning provision at home, as a result of a positive case within a class.



### **Keeping Safe at Christmas - Additional information.**

On Friday I wrote to you about the impact that a positive case in school may have on Christmas festivities. Can I take this opportunity to clarify the current situation, in light of current quarantine rules, in order that you can make an informed decision for your Christmas celebrations. We have had a number of queries to the school office and I am anxious that we all have the right information upon which to make decisions. In terms of dates, if your child comes under Track, Trace and Protect from Friday 11th December, they will be required to self isolate until 25th December. I know that this is a worry for many families.

To reiterate, I know that this may have some significant implications for many families, especially if you are planning to have older or vulnerable relatives at home for Christmas and I want again to reassure you that as a school we completely understand your concerns. We know that during these difficult times we are all making decisions to keep our families safe and therefore should you feel that you need to keep your child home in the last week, or indeed from Friday, we will fully respect your wishes. As a school we want to do everything that we possibly can to support you to have a safe and worry free Christmas break.

With that in mind we would also reiterate that we would be grateful if you are extra vigilant in the next few weeks and keep children home from school should they be under the weather. As you

know, many children are either asymptomatic or have very mild Covid symptoms, so erring on the side of caution is the best way forward for the next few weeks. Many thanks.

### **School Blended Learning Days- Thursday 17th/Friday 18th December**

By now you will have received a letter from Keri Cole, our Chief Education Officer, who has written to all parents and carers within the Borough to explain that all schools within the Caerphilly Borough will have **Wednesday 16th December as the LAST DAY of onsite learning**. As a result schools will provide blended learning for Thursday 17th and Friday 18th December 2020. I am sure that you will appreciate that this decision has been made in the best interests of public health. I have asked all teachers to prepare lessons for the last two days of term, and these can be accessed via See-Saw in the usual manner.

### **Current Staffing Level and Challenges**

Please note that the letter from Keri Cole also refers to the potential for some schools to move to blended learning earlier than Thursday 17th December, 'if sufficient staffing levels cannot be secured'. As headteachers we are all very aware that, presently, it is extremely challenging to find teaching support cover, with several supply agencies reporting that they have very few teachers or teaching assistants available, due to the very high demand arising as a result of the pandemic, and an increasing number of agency staff also having to self-isolate.

Please be reassured that presently, at school we are well staffed and we do not anticipate any need to close earlier than planned. However, should it arise that we are unable to source staffing for classes due to staff sickness, we may be in the position where we have no alternative other than to provide off-site blended learning for pupils until teaching cover can be secured.

Please be reassured that any such decision, should it arise will not be made lightly and will only be made after all other options have been exhausted. Many thanks

### **Christmas Jumper Day/Christmas Dinner Day - Wednesday 16th December**

This day will now be our last day of onsite learning for all children. We would love it if children could wear their Christmas jumper on this day. If your child would like to wear their Christmas jumper to school, we would be grateful if they could bring in a £1 donation for the Noah's Ark appeal.

### **Christmas Cards**

Don't forget, the last day for bringing Christmas cards into school this year is Friday 11th December. This will allow us to quarantine the cards over the weekend before handing them out for the following week. Please don't send in cards after this date, as we will be unable to allow children to give them out. Many thanks.

## **Enterprise Week**

Many thanks to all of you who have sent in a contribution for Enterprise Week. Your contribution to our school fund is greatly appreciated.

## **Revised Christmas Dates**

As we are ending our onsite learning on Wednesday 16th December, we have made some adjustments to our end of term dates.

Monday 14th December- Lip Sync Battle videos released

Monday 14th December - Christmas Panto Day (Look out.... he's behind you!!!)

Tuesday 15th December-Foundation Phase:Visit to Santa's Grotto

KS2 Christmas Games and Quiz

Wednesday 16th December -Christmas Film Morning/ Christmas Lunch and Jumper Day

