

Risca Primary School

Spring Term Newsletter No 8

Tuesday 2nd February 2021



Dear Mums and Dads,

I can't really believe that it is already February! Luckily, we seem to have escaped the worst of the snow over the last few weekends, and thankfully that has ensured that we have been able to keep school open despite the threat of heavy snow. I know that in the news we have heard that in some parts of Wales the snow fall threatened to disrupt the rollout of the vaccination programme. I am very grateful that we dodged significant snowfall in our part of the country. In terms of vaccinations, I know that many of us are now aware of relatives who are being called for their first jab. Let's hope that this programme rolls out into our community as fast as it possibly can. I know that we are all looking forward to more normality in our lives, and I know that children, parents and teachers will welcome the return of face to face teaching as soon as it is safe to do so.

Many thanks for all of you who have kept in touch with us via See-Saw this week. Can I say a personal big thank you to all of you who have sent kind messages, and messages of thanks to teachers this week. Those messages really are gratefully received, and they help to put a smile on teachers' faces! Thank you. And thank you to those of you who have worked alongside teachers this week to use certificates to encourage your children. This week our overall engagement levels have gone up by an additional 7%, which is absolutely remarkable. We are all very grateful for the support that you are giving to your children and to school.

This week, our big shout out has to go to all of the children in Mrs Rees' class, who have topped the charts for pupil engagement. This week, 91% of Mrs Rees' class were engaged in blended learning. Well done to all of you. Closely behind on 90% was Mr Bills' class, and not far behind that was Mrs Bosley's class. Well done to all of you for working so hard. I know that your teachers are really thrilled.

Next week we are going to introduce another certificate for children. Our Silver Certificate will be ready, and we will be sending that out to all children who complete all maths and English tasks. As you know we are really keen to keep pupils' basic skills up to date, and we just want to give a little extra incentive for all children to complete English and maths tasks. Look out for our Gold Certificate, which will be introduced on the following week!

As you are aware at Risca Primary School we use See-Saw and video lessons to deliver our blended learning provision. These lessons are supplemented by additional 'lighter' activities such as Duolingo. We also have a blended learning website, through which you and your child can easily access a wide range of resources, such as BBC Bitesize, Joe Wicks, Yoga, etc. In terms of our provision and strategy, we believe that currently video lessons best meet the needs of our community, as they allow pupils and parents to access lessons when it is convenient for them. We are extremely grateful to those parents who access our online work in the afternoons and evenings, and we are also grateful for those parents who use their weekends to support their children to catch up with their learning. I know that all of the teachers would want me to pass on their thanks for all of your support during these challenging times.

We have had a small number of enquiries from parents who are wondering whether we plan to adopt a strategy of 'live learning' into our blended learning policy. Presently we have no plans to introduce 'live learning' into our school day, as currently, when using our pre recorded video lessons we can see that pupil engagement is high. Additionally, we would have significant concerns that 'live learning' sessions would significantly disadvantage families who are currently successfully using one device on a shared basis to support their children's learning. We have worked hard as a school to send laptops to any families who do not have access to a suitable device, but we would be absolutely unable to ensure that all pupils have access to their device to have full access to regularly scheduled live learning sessions.

I know that many of you will have listened to the Minister's message on Friday, where he mooted the possibility of some pupils returning to school after the half term break, and I am sure that many of you would like to have some firm information regarding this potential widening of provision of face to face learning. Unfortunately, as a school we do not have any further information, other than the information that has currently been released to the press. I understand that this is not helpful to families at the moment, but please be rest assured that as soon as the Welsh Government shares concrete plans with us, we will share them with you. Many thanks for your understanding.

Don't forget that should your child have a positive coronavirus test whilst in school please contact us as soon as possible, via See-Saw, e-mail or telephone in order that we can start self isolation procedures immediately, and where possible limit any potential transmission, Many thanks.

Don't forget that we currently have two vacancies for parent governors, and our deadline for applications is not yet closed. Currently all of our meetings are online meetings, so you can be confident that you can become involved in our school life from the safety of your own home. If you are interested in supporting school and becoming a parent governor, please contact us and we will be happy to chat to you about what that entails and how you can apply. Many thanks.

Once again can I thank you for your patience and understanding, and thank all of you who continue to work with us to do the best for all of our children in these difficult times. Don't forget

we are still at the end of a telephone or e-mail, please get in touch with us should you need any advice or support.

Many thanks

Mrs Arthur and Staff