

# Milton St. John's CE Primary School

## Newsletter

Wednesday 6 January 2021

**Remember to subscribe to the newsletter on our website to receive an electronic copy.**

### **NEW NEWSLETTER ITEMS**

Sadly, once again we are only open to critical worker and vulnerable children and our 'stay at home superheroes' are learning from home. I had hoped that we would never have to do this again. However, there is a serious need to ensure we keep as many people safe as possible and current guidance states that schools will continue to operate this way until February half term.

As there are a large number of key worker children this time, all staff have to be in school. Remote learning has, and will be set each week for our 'stay at home superheroes' on Class Dojo. Teachers and teaching assistants will be teaching but checking Class Dojo throughout the day to respond to completed work. Some schools have been very strict with when work has to be handed in, but as we are acutely aware some of you at home will be trying to juggle work commitments or having more than one child at home, we are trying to be realistic and understanding to everyone's situations. Work/messages can be submitted at any time, however, to enable staff and parents to manage the complexities of home and in school learning, we have told staff to respond to work/messages during school hours.

As a reminder, please create your own schedule which fits in with your family routine and commitments. As much as possible, we have planned activities that children should be able to complete with minimal adult supervision. Obviously, for the younger children, this isn't always possible though. We would recommend that learning takes place in small chunks of 20 minutes punctuated by movement breaks. If children are finding it difficult to be motivated it often helps to adopt a 'now and next' approach. 'Now' you will do this task/block of learning and then 'next' you can choose an activity of your choice. Please do get in touch with your class teacher if you are experiencing difficulties with the remote learning. We certainly don't want this experience to be a negative one for the children at home and are realistic about the pressures parents are facing in having to do this. Please do be kind to yourselves and if it isn't going so well one day, stop have a break and a cuddle and have another go again later on or the next day. All that we do ask is that you try and do some learning each day, and if we had to prioritise anything for you to do at home it would be maths, reading and writing activities.

Teachers will be providing some videos to help motivate the children and will be replicating what learning is happening in school, wherever possible. Teachers have been looking at which topics in their year groups lend themselves better to remote learning, so there may be some slight changes to the curriculum overviews on the website because of this. Please do get in touch with us if you are finding things difficult. It's important to note that we are very aware that home schooling is not easy but we really value what you are able to do to help your children with their learning during this time.

You may have seen in the press that schools will be getting laptops to assist those families that may not have access to a device. Unfortunately, even though they were ordered in October, we still haven't received them. We are also trying to access 4G wireless routers from the DFE too but don't know when they will be available. We do however, currently have a limited number of Ipads that we could loan out to families that are struggling and have not been offered a place at school. You would have to have internet access though in order for them to work with Class Dojo. We also have data SIMs with 30GB use for 90 days that may be of use for those that have no access to the internet but have a phone or dongle they could use it with. Please contact the school to let us know if we can help with any of these things.

Please remember that we have a number of useful website links on our website for home learning too and the BBC have also announced curriculum-based learning on CBBC, BBC 2, Red Button & BBC iPlayer from Monday 11th January.

We **S**how respect. We are **H**onest. We **I**nclude others. We **N**ever give up. We seek **E**xcellence in all we do.

Our home learning link on the website can be found here:

<https://www.milton-st-johns.tameside.sch.uk/children/home-learning>

### **'Stay in school superhero' parent message**

We will be in touch this week to ask all critical workers to provide evidence of your eligibility. We haven't asked for this recently due to the speed at which things have moved in the last few days. Recent guidance states that we do not have to ask for a letter from your employer, but can ask for ID badges or payslips. We are having to be strict with this due to the high number of children we have in school and may have to query some roles with the LA to check that they fall into critical worker status. Please send a photograph of either your ID badge or Payslip (cover financial details) to [admin@milton-st-johns.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@milton-st-johns.tameside.sch.uk) by Friday 8 January. If we do not receive evidence, unfortunately we will not be able to offer a place for your child.

Please be aware that we may still need to close classes should there be a positive case in school. Due to the large number of children in school we are keeping classes separate as we were doing before the lockdown. If we are short staffed due to illness etc we are unable to mix classes. To ensure we keep everyone as safe as possible we may have to close classes to **all children** in the class because of this. We will, of course, keep you updated should this be the case.

Please also note that the procedures for snow days below will also be in place whilst we operate this way and we may have to shut school for **all children** if we had issues with the weather and staffing.

There has been conflicting advice regarding nurseries in schools being open to all and we are still awaiting further advice on this. Most school nurseries in Mossley and Carrbrook are closed to non-key worker or vulnerable children. Therefore, we are not able to accept any further nursery children but remain open to those children that have attended today. We are also now unable to accept any further Key Worker nursery children that have not already accepted a place.

Please send your children in wearing their uniforms. We are trying to keep things as normal as possible for the children in school. There have been a couple of changes to the days the children in school have PE due to swimming not being on due to the lockdown etc. The days the children need to wear their PE kits are as follows:

Year 1 – Monday and Friday

Year 2- Monday and Friday

Year 3 – Wednesday and Friday

Year 4a – Wednesday and Thursday

Year 4b – Tuesday and Thursday

Year 5 – Tuesday and Thursday

Year 6 – Tuesday and Friday

### **UPDATED NEWSLETTER ITEMS**

#### **Virtual Tour**

Our virtual tour is now on our new website. Feel free to have a look and see what some of the children have been getting up to this term.

#### **PE kits - reminder**

Please can we remind the children and parents that the PE kits worn on PE days should be plain black/blue jogging bottoms/shorts and a plain white T-shirt. The children can also wear a plain tracksuit top. The children are not allowed to wear football shirts and branded clothing please.

#### **Snow during Covid restrictions**

Given the recent national weather forecasts, we are very aware that snow may arrive at any point. Historically, we have not had to close the school very often, as we normally had several staff who were able to walk in and help support others in school. During such occasions classes are usually mixed together in the hall or in classrooms until sufficient staff are able to get in. **However, this year, with Covid and the restricted movement of children/staff around school**

**and between bubbles (classes); this will not be possible and there is a greater possibility that school may have to shut and learning move online because of this.**

It is very important to try and keep the school open, whenever it is possible, and we would like to take this opportunity to explain what will happen if we have snow.

- The school regularly checks the local weather stations and liaises with the Local Authority to gauge whether there is likelihood that there will be a heavy snowfall. Unfortunately, the accuracy of the forecast is not always correct and there could be a heavier snowfall than predicted and this can sometimes catch people out.
- The school has quite a number of staff who live outside the Mossley area. If there is not enough qualified staff available for each of the bubbles (classes) to come into school to open and manage the school safely, **then it cannot open due to health & safety grounds.**
- School also has to consider if the roads are dangerous then we may not receive any food deliveries. The school does not hold a large food reserve; therefore, if the snow is likely to cause disruption over a number of days, the school will not be able to provide a hot meal at lunch time.
- If the school boilers fail to operate, we need to call out technical services and arrange for a qualified engineer to repair the fault. The school would close if we are not able to heat the building. If the heating goes off during the day a judgement would be made about school closure and contacting parents.

#### **How you will be kept informed**

1. If necessary, a decision to close will be made no later than 8.00am on the morning of closure. We have to rely on the Site Manager and communication between staff about whether they are able to get in before a decision can be made. If we are able to inform you before this time, we will, but we always try our utmost to open and never take this decision lightly. **We will inform you of this decision by text.** Should our text messaging service fail (which can sometimes be the case when a number of schools are using the same system at the same time), the school website will be updated and teachers will inform you on class dojo as soon as they can (please be aware that staff may be trying to get into school at this point).
2. If there is a heavy fall of snow during the day, we will keep parents informed via text should the children need picked up early.

**Text messaging is a vital means in which we contact parents so please could you make sure that we have an up-to-date contact number. If you have recently renewed your mobile this is particularly important!**

#### **Dates for your Diary**

Fri 25-Mon 28 June 2021      Year 6 Kingswood residential trip

#### **Reception September 2021**

Applications for Reception class for September 2021 is open from 1 November 2020 until 15 January 2021.



A New Year.....time to pause and reflect on what to do with the time that is given to you. Always be your best and remember we rise by lifting others.