
Old Church C.E. (C) Primary School
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Headteacher: Ms D Clacy



June 19th 2020

Dear Parents,

Covid-19 Update

The news from the Government has been coming through in reams over the last few days and I am trying to make sense of it. I will try and let you know how I have interpreted it. However, get ready for U turns!!!

Current situation

We have had a successful week with our Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children returning to school. It has been lovely to see more faces back but sad that we have not got everybody back to school.

We still have spaces for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 if you are considering sending them back. Once we have reached 12 in each bubble we will not be able to admit any more.

The term bubble is used but it actually means a class which is isolated from other classes and has the same staff in the same rooms every day. This means that if there is a case of Covid-19 in school, the risk of contamination is minimised and the whole school wouldn't have to close. It also limits contacts with others and reduces the spread of infection.

Opening to Year 2,3,4,5 children.

Surprise, surprise another U-turn. After initially saying schools would not open to more children, the Government has now said it can. We will not be opening more widely for the following reasons:

- We followed the stringent advice set down of creating bubbles and putting all my staff in bubbles. To now change this I would have to keep some staff at home for 14 days before we could open a new bubble. If I did this it would mean the children only coming back for 8 days.
- We have also now lost 3 classrooms and the hall due to the flood so I do not have spare classrooms

Free School Meals

Well done to the Man Utd player Marcus Rashford, who has campaigned for FSM vouchers to continue over the summer holidays (that really hurts being nice about a Man Utd player.) This is a U turn by the Government. They have not as yet released details of how this will happen. I will keep you informed. The Government is suggesting

food parcels rather than vouchers but we have to look at the practicalities of these being supplied.

Children who are currently in school, and entitled to Free School Meal vouchers, will not be receiving them from Monday as we are providing free lunches in school.

Tutoring

The Government announced yesterday that there would be money given to schools to provide 'Catch up Tutoring'. They didn't give any more details of how this would happen. I believe it is for older children only. Schools would have to find 25% of the funding.

Summer Schools

The Government have also spoken a lot about Summer School catch up programmes. Again nothing more has been announced further on this. I can let you know that Old Church, along with most Walsall Schools, **will not be open** over the summer holidays. There is also no clear guidance on whether I can run a play scheme or not. But with 4 weeks to go until the end of term I cannot see this happening.

Transition

We are very conscious that children will be worried about their new teachers and classes for next year. Staff are working really hard on a transition plan for your child. It will be different but they have some lovely ideas. We will inform you of what is happening at a later date. We have to take into consideration that some children will have been out of school for 6 months.

Staff training

Staff are working really hard and doing an incredible amount of on line training. No we are not sat at home doing nothing! This includes mental health training for our children and staff and how to support them when they eventually return to school.

Support for children

If your child is struggling with understanding Covid-19. Below are a few tips:

- Listen and acknowledge the signs children and young people present (for example, they may be upset, distressed, anxious, angry or agitated).
- Look out for any changes in their behaviour.
- Provide clear information about the situation.
- Access reliable sources of information about COVID-19.
- Be aware of your own reactions as children may pick up on emotional cues.
- Connect regularly with friends and family by phone or Skype, Facetime etc
- Create a new routine remembering the importance of sleep, off line activities and socially distanced contact with wider family/ friends.
- Limit exposure to media and talk more about what they have seen and heard.

MindEd offers a free online educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults, which can support parents and carers through these exceptional circumstances.

You can also telephone us at school. We are happy to support you and your child.

Adult Support

The NHS in the Black Country have a 24 hour hot line to support adults who are struggling through Covid 19. Please call 0345 6460827–press 1 in you live in Sandwell or Wolverhampton and press 2 if you live in Dudley or Walsall.

Thank you as always for the support you are giving your child. It is much appreciated. My staff are also working incredibly hard to make sure we provide work for children both at home and school. I am bribing them regularly with cakes and bacon sandwiches but I am so appreciative of their hard work, commitment and positivity, particularly as most of them are juggling their own families, whilst looking after your children.

Have a lovely weekend. I hope that your football team wins this weekend, unless you are a Crystal Palace supporter or a team occupying the 6 bottom places in the Premier League! Come on Bournemouth- live on the BBC on Saturday night!

Kind Regards
Davina Clacy