

## Remote Message from the Principal 2

10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear all,

Apologies for intruding on your weekend, and not getting this message to you on Friday – that was quite a week! As I sit here and reflect on the last seven days, I almost can't believe we have only been 'back' for a week.

When we broke up for Christmas, we all thought pupils would return as normal on 5<sup>th</sup> January. Last Monday morning, we knew that Secondary was delayed by a week or two, by Monday afternoon we knew that Primary was delayed for a week and then, literally overnight, on Tuesday we 'reopened' a complete virtual school and key worker provision for at least the next six weeks.

**I thank every single member of the CFS community – teachers, support staff, Governors, you as parents and, perhaps most importantly, the pupils – for your flexibility, resilience, creativity and patience.**

As I did last time, I will spend part of these emails reflecting on my own experiences in lockdown. Not as some form of personal therapy session, but many of you told me that it helped you realise that what you were feeling was not unusual. I do not for a second think that I can empathise with every feeling, situation and issue you may be dealing with, but I can with some, and can certainly sympathise with most. Nor do I think that my coping strategies will work for everyone - they don't always work for me! But sharing experiences will hopefully help and, as ever, I will highlight the important information so that you can zoom to them if you have limited time in your very busy days.

My overriding impression from all areas of our community is that this time feels so much harder. I don't know if this is because it is winter or because it is the second time around or that the health situation feels worse. Maybe it is because we are all increasingly worried about the impact on children as this is not a 'one off' anymore, or because it has been harder to adjust to a home working routine straight after Christmas. I suspect that it is some combination of the above for us all. I personally found last Wednesday evening particularly difficult. After a remote meeting with the CFS Governors, I walked back into the lounge and my husband said to me, 'have you seen what is happening in the US?' I picked up my phone, went onto BBC News and my heart sank, for the second time in a week. In the last lockdown I remember there being very little in the news except for Covid, and me almost craving something else to be reported. That night I desperately wished that there wasn't. The images, videos and reports coming from the Capitol were shocking and the responses by seasoned US journalists and politicians said it all. Sadly we see anger and intolerance all the time, but it seems even more awful at a time when the world, and certainly individual countries, really need to be standing together. Whilst the protests were about Trump, and not Covid, I can't help but think that without Covid the anger wouldn't have been quite so extreme.

And so I did something that I used to really struggle with, but have become quite a master of over the last few months; I switched off. Completely. I am not ashamed to say it, but I have become a proper Netflix binge watcher when not working. And it has really helped. I love to read, but am too tired to most days. We love to play board games, but again most evenings I simply do not have the energy or time to. TV is effortless and has become a genuine escape for me. And I allow myself to fall into the worlds on the screen because, at the moment, they often seem a lot nicer! Now, you really don't need to know about my TV watching habits; all I am saying is **please try and find an escape**, even if just for half an hour one evening once work is done and the kids are in bed. My other escape is walking but sadly my mind and conversation sometimes wander on walks, and so it isn't always good for complete escapism, but very good for the heart and soul!

**For us all to get through this, you need some form of complete escape - a true 'bury your head in the sand activity.' I truly hope you have found yours, or will do soon.** And I sincerely hope that this weekend you managed to have a moment of escape, or at least some rest.

I will be in touch again on Friday, when I will begin my video messages for pupils again. I leave you now with some key updates.

With very best wishes

**Mrs Louise New**

**Principal**

## **Remote Learning**

Remote learning has started off well, with impressive engagement from the pupils. Thank you for all of your support and feedback. Teachers and LSAs are working extremely hard to provide more interactive learning and verbal tuition, whilst still giving families and pupils some flexibility at home. Further meetings and training will continue between staff this week, and we will be in touch with any tweaks or changes to ensure the experience is the most effective it can possibly be. We, as always, will continue to refine and enhance our approach wherever possible, including looking at ways to recreate the social peer support that is present in school.

A reminder that we do encourage, if possible, pupils to log on at the specific times for instant feedback, discussion and further help from their teachers. This will be at the same time as your child's normal timetable in Secondary – and we move into Week 1 tomorrow.

As last time, please do share with us what you are doing at home; every week from Friday I will resume my 'celebration of remote learning.'

Whilst the priority should always be to complete the work issued by the School – as this is what we are monitoring and corresponds with our own programmes of study – I thought now would be a good time to remind you of some of the extra resources available to your child. This is a revised list from last time, including the new BBC programmes you may have seen advertised.

- **Oak National Academy**

This is a brand-new enterprise created by 40 teachers from some of the leading schools across England and backed by government grant funding. It will provide 180 video lessons each week, created by teachers, across a broad range of subjects from maths to art to languages, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. <https://www.thenational.academy/>

- **Daily lessons from BBC Bitesize**

Working closely with teachers, well trusted education providers, the Department of Education in England, the Welsh Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, the BBC will provide nation specific, curriculum led activities and programming.

Whether complementing what schools are providing remotely, or as a standalone resource, BBC Bitesize daily will bring 14 weeks of educational programmes and lessons to every household in the country – whatever your child's age.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h?fbclid=IwAR344nAqE42\\_0a8o4by72zwBE2zvMxf4LLc1wKiXYLrXIHf2jFFms94P6cA](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h?fbclid=IwAR344nAqE42_0a8o4by72zwBE2zvMxf4LLc1wKiXYLrXIHf2jFFms94P6cA)

- **BBC Teach**

The BBC Teach website is home to thousands of free curriculum-mapped videos, arranged by age-group and subject. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach>

- **Twinkl**

Usually a paid-for resource, and one commonly used by teachers, Twinkl is offering every parent access to all Twinkl downloadable resources with a One Month Ultimate Membership, totally free of charge.

- **BBC Bitesize**

Online resources sorted by Key Stage specific to each nation, with free videos, step-by-step guides, activities and quizzes by level and subject. for children and parents. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

- **Teach Your Monster to Read** is a wonderful game made in association with leading educational experts and follows phonic phases 1, 2 and 3 in separate games. Perfect for EYFS through to KS1. Apps are available and paid for but the online website version is always free. Your child can follow their monster around and learn without realising how much they are learning to read! <https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>

- **Pobble** is an online writing platform. They post a free picture a day with prompts for discussion and writing. <http://www.pobble365.com/>

- **Oxford Owl** provides free ebooks all the time for children of primary age.

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>

- **Duolingo** is a free website made for language learning. One for all the family. Not specifically made for schools and you can pick whichever language you like. An initial assessment helps to pick up your current level if you want to improve rather than start from scratch.

<https://www.duolingo.com/>

- **Transum** [www.transum.org](http://www.transum.org) Times tables quizzes, puzzles, daily maths starters

- **TT Rockstars** [www.ttrockstars.com](http://www.ttrockstars.com) Timetables activities (Login required, but school has subscribed)

- **STEM Learning** [stem.org.uk](http://stem.org.uk) Science , maths investigations for whole school (by age group)

- **1001mathproblems.com** Problem solving maths for all years

- **Seneca (KS4/5)** <https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

- **Maths made easy** <https://mathsmadeeasy.co.uk/>

- **Maths sticks** <https://mathsticks.com/my/>

- **Top marks** <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/Search.aspx?Subject=16>

- **Languages** <https://www.duolingo.com/>

- **Geography** <https://www.3dgeography.co.uk/>

## Childcare Provision

Thank you to all of those who have been using the booking system over the last week. A reminder of a few essential points:

- It is vital that you book each week in the booking windows outlined, even if you have indicated to us a long term need.

**For childcare needs week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> January:** Booking window – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January (deadline 3pm on Wednesday). Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January

**For childcare needs week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> January:** Booking window – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January (deadline 3pm on Wednesday). Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January

**For childcare needs week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> February:** Booking window – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January to Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January (deadline 3pm on Wednesday). Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 28<sup>st</sup> January

**For childcare needs week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> February:** Booking window – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February (deadline 3pm on Wednesday). Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February

- You have probably seen on the news that many schools are now having to turn people away and prioritise the provision. We have not had to do this yet, but I have to be honest and say that we were very close to capacity last week. If pupil numbers increase, or staff availability alters – as can happen in this pandemic – we may have to prioritise the provision. I kindly ask therefore, that you do only use this provision if essential, so that we can protect it for those that simply have no other option (which I know is the case for many of you). The Department of Education released new guidance on Friday, encouraging parents to keep their children at home if they are able to - ‘Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.’
- It is vital that you let us know if your child no longer needs the place that has been booked for them. Whilst illness can of course happen on the day, we had a few no shows last week not linked to illness. As places are limited, it is vital that no space is wasted so please do keep us informed. If there are multiple no shows from the same family, we are afraid that you will lose priority in future bookings.
- Similarly, we are unable to accommodate pupils who have not been booked in advance and had their place confirmed on the Thursday before.
- All children must bring their own packed lunch.

## Testing Centre

Obviously things have changed somewhat, now that Secondary schools are currently not open to all pupils. However, we are continuing to plan our rapid testing provision, with the aim to initially open up testing to Secondary children in the key worker provision in the next few weeks – I will be in touch beforehand with information, request for consent etc. We are also looking ahead and planning for the reopening of schools, where mass testing is still likely to be encouraged. For now, we are asking for names of any parents who may be able to volunteer their time and services at any such time that we will need to staff a full testing centre or indeed to support testing in our childcare provision. Whilst we do not have dates yet, we want to be ready when the time comes. **So, if you may be able to help us in some capacity in school in our testing centre, please email your name and rough availability to [office@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:office@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk). We will log your details and be back in touch soon.** Thank you in advance to anyone who is able to help.

## Years 11 and 13

Whilst it was confirmed this week, as suspected, that GCSE and A-Level grades will be based on centre assessed grades, we have been told we will receive no more detail as to how this will work until the end of February. I share yours and your child’s frustration with this timescale, but for now – as mentioned last week – all pupils really need to keep going, keeping on top of all of their remote learning. Mock results and latest predictions are due out shortly – whilst these reports and data releases may take a slightly different format to planned, we will share as much information with you as possible. I will confirm to you this week about how and when this will all happen, along with plans for the Year 11 and Year 13 PPC that is in the diary for the start of February.