Thursday 21st January 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope you are finding your children settling into the rhythm and new way of remote education now that we are in our third week of term.

**Coronavirus Update – Lateral Flow Device Testing for Primary Staff**

Given that Lateral Flow Device testing is currently receiving much media attention I wanted to update you on the government’s next step in their approach to control the Covid-19 pandemic in primary schools. From Monday 25th January all primary schools will start rapid swab testing using Lateral Flow Device Tests (LFD’s) for staff. This will occur twice a week, three or four days apart, at home. The LFD’s provide a swift result and are designed to identify adults who may have Covid-19 but do not show any symptoms. Testing kits are being provided for all schools nationally so all staff can be tested. It is hoped that this step will help to further break the chain of infection.

If a member of staff returns a positive LFD test result they will then need to take a PCR or Polymerase Chain Reaction test. This is the laboratory DNA test that is processed and recorded by the NHS. In this situation the member of staff will need to remain off work until the result of the PCR is returned. This is now much faster than at the time of the earlier lockdowns and is typically around 24 hours. Following any positive LFD test result, it is likely that the bubble in which that member of staff works would need to self-isolate. The children in that bubble will remain at home receiving remote education until the time of the PCR test is known. In the event of a positive PCR test result, children in that bubble will need to remain at home and self-isolate in line with the current government guidelines for 10 days.

At Elburton Primary school we will be asking staff to take the test in the evening. This is so parents have more notice if we need to close a bubble the following day. Please look out for communication, should we need to close a bubble and children remain at home. We will communicate this electronically through an email as soon as possible the evening before a bubble is closed the next day. We hope that this extra control measure will not result in bubbles closing but felt it was important to inform you that there is a possibility of closure following these new tests being carried out.

**Devices for Families**

To date, we have loaned 17 laptops/chrome books to families that require additional support with technology. If you need additional support (for instance, you may have more than one child at home or parents may be using the family laptop for work etc.) please contact the school so that we can arrange a loan for you in order for your child to access their learning.

**Saltram Rotary Club**

A huge thank you to the Saltram Rotary Club. This week the school received a donation of 5 tablet devices to support children with remote learning. We are very grateful for this donation. As above, if we can help you by loaning equipment please make contact with the school office.

**Keeping Children and Staff Safe**

Numbers of children in school have continued to slowly rise which is a concern for me. The Government guidance continues to state that the safest place for your children is at home. In some year groups this week we have 42% of the year group in at the same time. We are continuing to assess the risk to children and staff of having high numbers in particular year groups. Please may I remind parents who are critical workers to only use the school if you absolutely need to. We do not wish to consider altering the criteria for children who can attend the school but we may need to consider this if numbers continue to increase.

**School Staff**

I would publicly like to thank every member of the school staff who are working hard in these extraordinary times to ensure the learning and welfare of our children is of the highest possible standard. As stated above, some year groups are supporting nearly half of the cohort in school whilst also supporting and teaching the other half at home. I am proud that the team are responding to the challenges with their custom positivity and drive to ensure all children receive the education they deserve but also, and maybe more importantly, the children feel part of the community no matter where they are.

**You!**

Thank you to all parents for your kindness, positivity and understanding. We recognise how tough this period of time is, particularly those that are juggling remote learning whilst attempting to work from home. This is a huge task and we know that it is far from easy. We recognise that everyone is doing their very best. You may feel overwhelmed; we are here to support if you need us, even for a reassuring conversation that you really are doing all you possibly can.

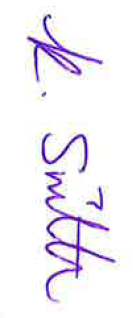
**Emotional Logic Workshop for Parents**

To support our children and staff we have started to access training in Emotional Logic. This is excellent training, our staff found it very useful this week. We have organised for a free workshop for our parents which I highly recommend, particularly in these challenging times. Please click on the link below for more details.

<https://www.emotionallogiccentre.org.uk/events/free-parent-introduction-session/>

Once you sign up you will be sent the access link for the Zoom meeting the day before and a reminder an hour before the session. The session is **at 7:30pm on** **Thursday 28th Jan**. It will be for about an hour with time for questions etc afterwards. I do hope that you find this introductory session supportive.

Best wishes,



Mr Keith Smithers

Acting Headteacher