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Headteacher Update – 8th January 2021

Well, what a challenging week this has been and I am sure it was not the start of 2021 or the spring term any of us wanted. I was extremely disappointed to have to close the school at the start of term but we simply didn't have enough staff for all the pupils to be in school safely.

Contrary to belief, I certainly didn't envisage the Prime Minister's announcement of a 3rd National lockdown. Full details of the lockdown restrictions including the stay at home message can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home.

The decision to move schools to remote learning for all, does not suggest that schools are no longer safe places for young people. Instead, by limiting attendance for all pupils it is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households.

Already this week Pixmore opened on Tuesday 5th January for the children who are considered 'vulnerable' and critical workers. All other pupils and students will receive remote education until February half term and must remain at home, in line with national guidance.

For next week we have limited the number of children (15 at the moment) we can safely support in their reduced class bubble arrangements. Our classrooms are not big and we are trying to limit social contact as well, therefore, even if you are a critical worker, if your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, then they should. Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role. The list of critical workers can be found on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>.

At present, I do not have the space to take any more pupils whose parents are critical workers. We have had to balance the needs of our 'vulnerable' pupils (the numbers of which have increased since the first national lockdown in 2020) with that of support for critical worker parents. I am operating a 'waiting list' and staff will be in contact with parents/carers to offer places when and if they become available.

Remote Learning

Firstly, we were not expecting to go into a 'full whole school remote learning scenario' from the off this term, we had only put on work for the self-isolating or absent children. So this week staff have been busy making videos and adapting materials for this week's lessons. I know the Zoom meetings on Tuesday were a bit hit and miss as some parents couldn't access the link or weren't aware of the information. These are all 'teething problems' and will settle down once we all get into a routine.



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Secondly, as we did last year we asked you for your feedback on our remote learning and we will do again but please give us time to have a go at running at least a full week of whole school remote learning. It's a new way of working for the staff too! I know that staff and I would rather work with parents/carers than against them so please talk to us rather than rush off to OFSTED to complain!

Thirdly, I know parents/carers have their own jobs to do, just as a number of our teaching staff have to do in-school and home learning too! So please be kind to yourself and your children.

Fourthly, our offer for the moment is as follows:

- Two scheduled Zooms calls with first one on Mondays (it was Tuesday this week as it was the start of term!) – the timings are Whole School @ 09:05, Y3 @ 09:30, Y4 @ 10:00, Y5 @ 10:30, Y6 @ 11:00. These are a priority to attend as teachers will check in with pupils, it's a time to go through the work for the week and sometime to see their classmates. The link will be sent via Seesaw /MarvellousMe with a password.
- The other Zoom session will be during Thursday morning 9-11am where one of the Year Group teachers will be online to ask questions and where you can get can support with learning for all year groups.
- One Year group teacher will be on 'remote learning' – so will be able to answer queries and check and feedback to work posted on SeeSaw almost immediately. The other teacher is in the classroom doing face to face work.
- Teaching assistants and keyworkers in each year group will be contacting parent/carers to check how things are, so please let them know if you need any support, we will see what we can do to help you either remotely or in school.
- You will need to locate the Home learning Tab on the school website.
- Go to your child's year group and the week we are on.
- There will be a daily maths and English lesson - usually with support videos and materials/activities.
- There will also be other subject daily lessons - science, history, geography etc.
- Some community activities that you might like to participate in for a longer term in the next few weeks.
- In addition there are also weekly homework tasks – spelling, reading, arithmetic and times tables.
- There will be a weekly Head teacher's video which you will be able to view from Friday.
- If your family needs a printed work pack please communicate this to your child's teacher via the schoolteachers@pixmore.herts.sch.uk. Your child's printed packs will then be ready to collect from Monday morning they will be in the Reception Area.
- Please also let us know if you are struggling with technology or devices. We are awaiting the promised DfE laptops but in the meantime, we have some school devices that families can use and some mobile broadband sim cards which may help with data usage in the home.
- Mrs Willans (07529220197) and Mrs Kennedy (07422678961) can be texted during the school day.



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Finally, please share your child's work / activities with your class teacher and if you're happy we will share it on our school Facebook page.

Use the lockdown as an opportunity to do something new – you can still go for a walk, so maybe take photographs of the same spot to see how it changes through this period. Perhaps litter pick and clean up an area, learn a new skill, learn a language, a poem, try out a new craft or pick up an old one! Here's my attempt at sewing-embroidery. I am attempting to make a Friendship quilt – perhaps I'll finish it by half term - the yellow blob is supposed to be my cat!



Take care.
Kind Regards

Mrs Alex Evans
Headteacher