

Thursday 7th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers of Ecclesall Primary School children,

Firstly, thank you so much to all those families who are working in extremely difficult circumstances at home. We appreciate the juggling act that many of you are doing, to continue to deliver work to your employer (including many Key Workers too), whilst also home educating your children. We do not underestimate the effort that this takes and we are so appreciative of everything that you are doing to keep not only your own children and families safe but also, the wider community by keeping the numbers of children in school at any given time to an absolute minimum. Thank you.

Requests for places

We have had a very high amount of requests for a place and have allocated 231 places in total at present. We have had to make some difficult decisions and we know that a few parents have been disappointed with the results. We cannot accept any more children at present without putting our staff at greater risk. We are at capacity and our bubbles are larger than in the summer term due to these high numbers. If you are a key worker but have another responsible adult at home, please consider whether you still need a place, even if your child has started with us yesterday. We know there are many key workers families (some with both parents seen as critical key workers) who have kept their children at home even though they would qualify for a place and for this, we really **THANK YOU!** The Government advice is even stronger this time “**STAY AT HOME**”. Boris Johnson has warned everyone that “the coming weeks would be the hardest yet amid surging cases and patient numbers”. Yesterday, the latest daily positive Covid figures were 62,322 with 1,041 deaths reported. We have been made aware that some people may have misunderstood the Government guidance. **If you think this applies to you, please contact us immediately. It may be that we will need to ask for proof of employment from both parents/carers if not.** Having more children at school increases the risk of transmission across our school community. The Government’s stance was that schools are shut to **most** children; we have taken the viewpoint, along with other schools in the local area that if there is an adult in the home then that is the safest place for the child to be.

Guidance re vulnerable children and critical key workers

This guidance below in bold is from Sheffield Local Authority for all Sheffield schools:

“In order to ensure a fair and transparent system, Sheffield schools have worked with the Local Authority to develop and agree a key criteria process to help prioritise which children will be able to access face-to-face provision over the coming weeks.

With schools needing to ensure that they have the staffing capacity to deliver both remote and face-to-face learning simultaneously, while also ensuring that schools are as safe as possible, it has been necessary to limit the numbers of children learning on school premises. This unfortunately means that not everybody who has requested to receive face-to-face provision has been invited to do so.

Our first priority remains our vulnerable children. After that, those families where both parents (or single parents) are critical key workers have been given initial priority, this is to ensure that the only children receiving their learning in school are those who have nobody at home who can safely support them.

Where it has been possible schools have worked hard to offer spaces to all those who have applied and are eligible, where capacity and resource has made this not possible the criteria has been used to decide how to offer places”.

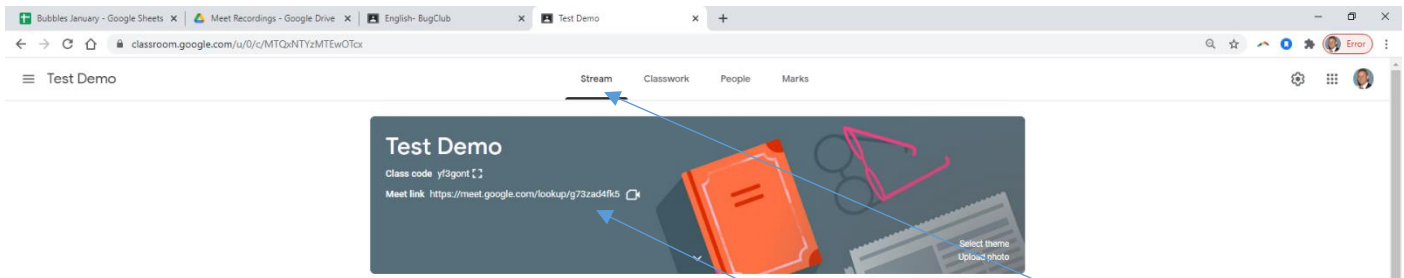
The LA are working on a definition for vulnerable and the criteria for critical workers with priority lists of 1-4. We will share this with you when available.

Remote Learning on Google classroom

Since Monday night, we have been working hard to ensure we have high quality remote learning for two thirds of our children who are at home. We are delivering the same content to children working in school and at home remotely. Our aim is that each child has as close to the ‘same, fair deal’ as is possible in the current circumstances.

School staff have been working extremely hard to make sure that there is a range of learning resources each day on the google classrooms. Please access as much of this material as is suitable for your child/family and please do feel free to adapt it as you think to suit your individual circumstances. School staff will return work that is turned in (and may also make a brief comment) but please do be aware that this may take longer than usual. The teachers really do recognise the effort that the children are making to complete and return their work. There will be plenty of recorded

messages to the children from school staff and we are going to roll out a programme of live touch base google meets between the children at home and teaching staff.



You will be informed of a time that the meeting for each class will take place in the **stream** section of the Google Classroom. At the allotted time, they should click on the **meet link** in the title bar of their classroom and their teacher will let them into the meeting. Please note that the children will not be able to start a meeting without their teacher present. The session is likely to last between 10-15 minutes. We will make sure that all the children have left the meeting before the teacher logs off. Please can you ensure that the children are appropriately dressed (no pjs please), and not in their bedrooms. Initially we would like the children to mute their microphones other than when asked to talk. We would remind the children that they should have the same standards of behaviour as if in school – i.e. listening, sitting, concentrating and being respectful.

If anyone is experiencing difficulties getting onto their Google Classroom or other sites, please get in touch with gwillatt@ecclesall.sheffield.sch.uk and Mr Willatt will do what he can to help.

Many thanks for all your support during the current situation and we hope that the introduction of some live sessions will be beneficial to all involved.

Healthy Minds Survey and Emotional Well-being information

We thought it would be useful to share with you some of the data from the Healthy Minds Survey which the children completed in October 2020, following the first lockdown. Whilst it was a challenging time, here are some of the quotes from the children about what they enjoyed.

- "I enjoyed being with my family and being able to have breaks in between school work. I liked having snacks in between working. Having lots of time to play in the garden and practice my sport. I liked spending more time with my brother."
- "I enjoyed spending lots of time with mummy and daddy."
- "I enjoyed Daddy teaching me."
- "I enjoyed the Skate Park"
- "I enjoyed ballet and tap lessons on the computer."

- *"I enjoyed talking to my friends on Houseparty."*
- *"I enjoyed that I could work at my own pace"*

In summer 2020, we were all concerned about how the children would 'settle back into school' following the lockdown, but the autumn term has proved just how resilient the children can be; they settled amazingly well! Yes, there will still be many challenges on the road ahead, but as a community, we can support the children in rising to them.

Below are two leaflets from Healthy Minds and the NHS, which we think are particularly useful. We have also attached the link to the 'Emotional Wellbeing Home Learning Pack' from before, which has a wealth of info and ideas for promoting emotional wellbeing.

<https://ecclesallprimary.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Emotional-Wellbeing-Home-Learning-Pack.pdf>

As the advice recommends, please 'stay connected' and talk to family and friends. Please do get in touch with school if you are struggling so we offer advice and sign post you to support. The previous lockdown was challenging for all parents and children in many different ways. We are again in lockdown and this will again present many challenges to families. The advice around emotional wellbeing is the same as last time; it is important that we continue to look after each other and ourselves.

We would also like to greatly thank our wonderful, hardworking staff who have embraced the challenges this week and are working tirelessly to support both children at home and at school.

Please be reassured that the safety and well-being of our whole community and the quality of our "Remote Learning" are our priorities. We would like to thank everyone for your tremendous support, patience, kindness and understanding this week. It has been greatly appreciated by both my staff and governors.

Kind Regards

Emma Hardy
Head Teacher

Nicole Ramsey
Deputy Head

Guy Willatt
Deputy Head

Joanna Kay
SENCO

Emotion coaching wheel

Start here



Healthy Minds Covid-19 advice

Structure

Try to maintain routines as much as possible. If you find yourself at home more than usual then try and imitate a structure similar to your child's usual day (get up, get dressed, do work in a specific place, have lunch at a similar time). Write it down put it on display.



If you aren't happy with your current routine, this might be a chance to do things differently.

Be mindful of how you engage with news. Rather than constantly checking, get updates at one or two points in the day. Avoid constant news feeds. Monitor the effect that news has on your mood and worry. Remember that news creates a focusing illusion and there are a huge number of positive stories out there that are not reported.

Think about how to replace the things you normally do with 'socially distancing' equivalents.



Attunement

Talk to children in an age-appropriate way. Give clear and simple messages and expect to repeat these when children ask again.

Identify and name the difficulty that uncertainty brings. Acknowledge and normalise concerns and worry.

Respond in an open and supportive way; children are likely to need extra love and attention during this time.

Emotional regulation

Children are sensitive to emotion and will often reflect the emotions of adults—have calm conversations and be mindful of your own stress levels.

Do things that help relax. Be aware of your breathing and bodily tension; use deep breathing and muscle relaxation to help lower stress. Change your focus and immerse yourself in a favourite activity

Maintain healthy sleep patterns. Keep up exercise in your day and try to get outdoors, in line with local guidance about social contact.

Stay connected to people—use technology to help stay in touch with friends and family.

