

# Cowling Community Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs S Marshall



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Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to all our families for continuing to work with us delivering home learning. We are now in Week 3 of the latest national lockdown and as a school we are so grateful to all our families for their commitment to home learning and use of Google Classroom. We know this is a very challenging task but I am heartened by the way the whole school community, families and staff, have pulled together to try to get the very best for all our children in difficult circumstances.

The use of digital platforms has been integrated rapidly into school and home life and, while it can never replace the real classroom experience, it is working well, thanks to the engagement of our families and pupils. Teachers are able to check your child's engagement with home learning and have been contacting parents and carers if they have not received work from a child so we can offer additional support if needed. Our teachers are working hard to adapt all learning so it works well for the children. The vast majority of children are completing their work brilliantly but if your child is having any difficulties please let us know.

As you will be aware, the teaching team at Cowling continues to work incredibly hard, both in supporting children of key workers in school and in their delivery of our curriculum to the vast majority of our children learning at home. This is no mean feat and I am indebted to our staff for their dedication and commitment to our children. This lockdown has once again demonstrated that while we are a small school, without all the technical support and staff resources larger schools may be able to deploy, we do care very much about all our pupils and families and are determined to ensure our pupils continue to get the best education we can deliver.

Our children have been amazing in their adaptability and resilience. I have always believed it is the partnership between school and home which makes such a difference to children, and I could not ask for more willing families to work with throughout this period. Your support is very much appreciated and I thank you for all you have done and are continuing to do.

This week you may have heard the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announce on BBC News that he will give families two weeks notice of when children will be able to return to school in England. The Government has stressed it wishes to see children back in the classroom at the earliest opportunity, but the key criteria is the easing of pressure on the NHS. At Cowling, we are also keen to have all our children back with us as soon as possible as we understand the pressure on families and the demands of home



education. At this point, I am afraid I have no information as to when that full return may be and await the Education Secretary's announcement.

Following advice, teachers are advised to record their Google Meets. This is a safeguarding procedure as the teacher is often delivering Meets alone from home. If you have any queries regarding safeguarding and Google Meets please get in touch.

I am pleased that we have now been able to distribute nine devices (laptops, netbooks, ipads or chromebooks) on loan to families who have struggled to access online learning. These devices have been supplied either from school resources or via the Government scheme. Unfortunately, we do not have unlimited supplies of devices but if you are having any problems please get in touch with school and we will see if we can help. Some families are able to use Xbox and Playstation to access Google Classroom – if you require a keyboard and a mouse please contact school.

This morning, I have received a supply of rapid Covid tests for school staff as part of a nationwide initiative to test all primary school staff with the aim of identifying asymptomatic cases. I am asking all staff to test themselves in an evening so that in the event of a positive case being identified, and the need to close a key worker bubble, we can give those families as much notice as possible. As long as the teacher is well they will continue to provide work to all children via Google Classroom. We have contingency arrangements in place should your child's teacher become poorly, ensuring that we can continue to deliver online learning. I am ever hopeful we will not have to close a key worker bubble and apologise if we have to do so, as I understand the difficulties this would cause, especially for key workers. However, we need to get on top of this virus if we are to return to normality and the testing of primary school staff is a welcome step.

After the atrocious weather of the past week, it is lovely to see the sunshine and blue skies this morning. Hopefully a sign of better times to come. Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable weekend.

With best wishes,

Susan Marshall  
(Headteacher)

