

# Cowling Community Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, may I say an enormous thank you to our families for their support following the Prime Minister's announcement last night that schools across England must close until February half-term.

You will be aware, following the letter I had sent just hours before, that at Cowling we were looking forward to having all our children back with us for the start of the new term. I know it is difficult to believe but schools had absolutely no prior knowledge of what the Prime Minister was about to announce and I am so sorry for all our families who I know have had to make arrangements at very short notice.

Having heard the news, I texted all families immediately but again am sorry as I know the text did not come through until late. This is because our provider, Teachers2parents crashed as schools across the country tried to contact families. Social Media has many pitfalls but I am glad we have our school page as it meant I was able to get information to families who generously shared and passed on the information on behalf of school.

## **National Lockdown: Stay at Home**

The country is now in a new national lockdown and the Government says "We have resisted closing schools until now, but in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every level at our disposal to reduce all contacts outside households wherever possible."

The Government also says: "You must not leave or be outside of your home except where you have a 'reasonable excuse'. This will be put in law. The police can take action against you if you leave home without a 'reasonable excuse', and issue you with a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice). You can be given a Fixed Penalty Notice of £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400."

The message is clearly that people need to stay at home, not mix with other households and maintain social distancing. Just as in the first lockdown, I would ask that, while I do completely understand how difficult it is combining childcare with work or caring responsibilities, if you can care for your child at home then this is what you should do.

You can read the National lockdown:stay at home information here: [Government National Lockdown Stay at Home](#)



## Google Classroom: online learning

I am grateful to our teachers who responded rapidly, ensuring teaching was online from this morning. There are many expectations on schools to provide both quality provision for key workers within the classroom and simultaneously for children accessing remote education. We have made great strides at Cowling in using Google Classroom and have learned more from each time we have needed to deploy it following the closure of bubbles. Of course, online learning however good, can never replicate the dynamics of a classroom – for skilled teachers that is where the magic happens, in the relationships, questioning and support we deliver to pupils. However, we will strive to make it the best it can be.

We are aiming for children to have access to an online Google Meet where the teacher will check in with pupils, explain the work for the day and answer any queries or deliver teaching points regarding the work set. This will enable pupils to ask questions. The work will be set on Google Classroom and children will hand it in and the teacher will be able to feedback as appropriate. The Government asks teachers to feedback at least weekly but our teachers will strive to respond daily. A second Google Meet will be held in the afternoon and we hope this will help relieve the sense of isolation for children from their school friends and also enable staff to answer any questions.

While the Government has listed an expectation that primary pupils do an average of three hours work a day, I personally feel that for many families that is just unrealistic. Schools are absolutely obliged to set challenging work which mirrors the curriculum as closely as possible – we will do so but we completely appreciate that parents and carers can only do what they can. Please do not add to any anxiety or stress in your household if online learning is causing you difficulties. This is an unprecedented situation. I am not at all saying I do not want your child to do any home learning but what I am saying is parents and carers know their children best. The health and well-being of families and children is paramount. Do what you can, contact us if you need support and do not worry if you cannot get through the work set.

I hope that makes sense and gives our families some comfort. If you have any problems at all please ring school or email. Families are also able to email teachers through Google Classroom. I would ask all families to treat our teaching staff with courtesy and kindness. We have amazingly supportive families at Cowling and it is this successful partnership between home and school which makes all the difference to a child. One thing I am absolutely certain of at Cowling is that my team will always strive to do what we can to help – please just ask. If you are unhappy or have any concerns whatsoever please raise them directly with the teachers or with myself or Mrs Dawson. I am well aware of social media groups such as What's App and all I can say is that if you have an issue, get in touch with us and we will do everything we can to support you. As you would expect, as in all workplaces school will not stand for abusive comments towards staff – we wouldn't tolerate it on school premises and we won't tolerate it online. Our families have always been so supportive of school and I am grateful to you all for your willingness to work with us though this period.

## Children of Key Workers

Lockdown asks everyone to stay at home and not mix with others. Schools are closed to all children apart from the children of key workers and vulnerable children. The criteria for key worker status can be found here: [Criteria Key Workers](#) and relates to individuals working in the following fields:

Health and Social Care, Education and Childcare, Key Public Services (justice, religion, charities delivering frontline services, funeral services, journalists and broadcasters), local and national Government, food and other necessary goods, public safety and national security, transport and border, utilities, communication and financial services.

This is an extensive list and I am aware some schools have been flooded with requests for children to attend school and they are having to consider limiting access to certain days rather than the full week to make provision as safe as possible. I am grateful that at Cowling our families have responded to the



message that if you can care for your child at home, then that is what you should do. I fully understand the implications for parents and carers of primary aged children who may not be able to work during lockdown and we are absolutely committed to providing care for the children of critical key workers. Thank you to all key workers who have contacted school and also to those key worker families who are trying to ease pressure on school by managing to juggle work and childcare – no easy task I know.

I am very pleased to say that at this point in time I have enough staff to cover key worker provision for the families who have requested it. This is a greater number than in previous lockdowns and we will work hard to sustain social distancing in school. Children will be working in one of three bubbles, YR, Y1 and Y2, Y3 and Y4 or Y5 and Y6. Children at present are asked to wear their school uniform. School meals will be provided on site for children attending school or a packed lunch can be brought.

School will be open for key worker pupils during normal school hours and children will attend through their normal doors and exit in the following ways: Class 1 Pendle from their classroom door as normal into the small playground, Class 2 Sharp Haw through the main playground as normal, Class 3,4 and 5 from the main playground at the end of the day. If you are able to collect your child before normal pick up time please come to the main entrance and we will bring them to you.

I am sorry that it has come to another lockdown. However, if we all play our part and with the hope of vaccines on the horizon, I am confident 2021 will be a more positive one for us all. Thank you for working in partnership with us at Cowling Primary and please know that we are doing, and will continue to do, everything we possibly can to support our children and families through this lockdown.

With best wishes,

Susan Marshall  
(Headteacher)

