

Featherstone Primary School

Weekly Home/School Newsletter



8th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We were very much looking forward to welcoming the children back on Tuesday this week when, at 8pm on Monday night, Boris Johnson closed schools to all but children of critical workers. My school managers and I immediately had an online meeting to begin the planning process. On Tuesday, teaching, office and site staff worked incredibly hard and fast in order to get the school open safely from Wednesday for children of critical workers. I have a very dedicated, hardworking team and I am lucky and blessed to work with them. Their focus and care meant that we opened for children, safely. The staff are a credit to the school.

This is the first Weekly Home/School Newsletter of 2021. There are important updates and reminders as well as some brilliant photographs of the home/remote learning that has been taking place this week.

Assessments and testing

It was announced on Wednesday that all primary school assessments and testing would be cancelled this academic year:

- Key Stage One tests
- Year 1 phonics screen check
- Year 2 SATs
- Year 2 teacher assessment
- Year 4 multiplication check
- Year 6 SATs
- Year 6 teacher assessment

I welcome these exam cancellations particularly in the disruptions that we have had. When all children return to school full time, which the government is hoping will be after February half term, the teaching staff will be able to really focus on the teaching content that matters without worrying about pressures of external testing. Additionally, the children will not have the stresses and worries that comes with sitting these papers. They have been through enough with these lockdowns and we can really make sure they do well and enjoy school test-free!

Free school meals (FSM)

Currently, the government nor Birmingham City Council are providing FSM vouchers. Instead, they are asking that schools provide a weekly food parcel for those families who are entitled to benefits-related free school meals. Each week, a form will open on our school website and you will be able to order an FSM food parcel. Mr. Douglas will email you when the form is open. You will then have time to order a parcel by filling in the form. Due to ordering, if you miss completing the form, you won't be able to have a parcel that week.

Collection day is every Friday between 11am – 11.30am. Please only order a food parcel if you intend to collect it as these cost the school money. Please note that any uncollected food parcels can be charged to you. Like I said, at the moment, vouchers are not being given but if this changes, Mr. Douglas will be in contact with you.

Critical Worker provision

We are really happy to support those parents who are providing critical work to help the fight against coronavirus. In school, we are keeping numbers to the absolute minimum. Although we want schools to re-open, we want them to re-open safely and so as part of critical worker provision, we are only admitting children whose critical worker parents have got **no other option** but to send their children to school. We have to be very strict with how many children we have on site due to the danger of the coronavirus. If you know you are a critical worker and sending your child to school is a last resort, please complete [this form](#) on our website and someone from school will be in contact with you. Guidance about critical workers can be found [here](#).

Home/Remote learning

Thank you to the large number of families who quickly responded to our three questions yesterday about home/remote learning. We recognise that home learning is not the same as begin in front of a teacher in school but it is really important to make sure that children do not fall behind. We are currently planning on changing our approach to home learning to make it even more effective than it already is. More details to follow about pre-recorded lessons and even some live lessons from teaching staff.

Please not that teachers expect the work that they set to be returned. Although they say to return work by 3pm daily, teachers understand how busy parents are with home learning and working from home too. They will happily look at work when it is sent back. If we do not hear from you, we will be getting in contact with you to see why home learning isn't being sent back. Thank you for your co-operation.

Snow

In the event of school needing to close due to bad weather, an announcement will be made to parents via text and email. Following this, we will then inform Birmingham City Council and the Radio broadcasters, who will then publish this through their websites and school closure announcements. Please can I ask parents not to call school to ask if we are open— if you **do not get** a text from Groupcall Messenger, then school is open as normal.

The closure of school is not an easy decision to make; several factors have to be taken into account, i.e. safety for parents to get children to school, accessibility onto school site, heating conditions, staffing numbers in school and also assessing if the weather is going to worsen during the day. All these factors have to be considered before the final decision is made by 7:00am.

If school is open and it has snowed, we can only grit the pathways on school grounds. The Council is responsible for gritting the road and not the school.

Have a lovely weekend. Stay safe.
From Mr. E. Gaibee (Headteacher)

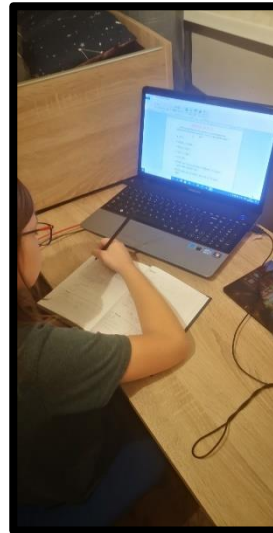
Enjoy these home learning photos...



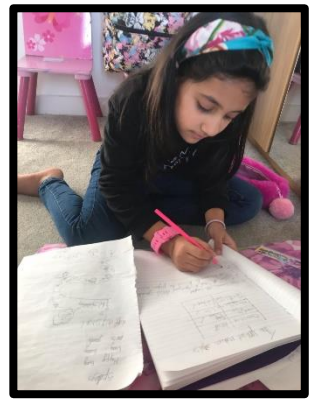
Joseph looking forward to school on a snowy winter morning!



Mahir doing some great writing.



Adrian's home learning station!



Maryam working hard!



Aadim is focusing really hard.



Emilia is doing so well with her counting!



Amaya misses her teachers but is doing very well here!