

Rednal Hill Infant School and Nursery Class
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Headteacher: Miss A Pendleton



Dear Parents and Carers

Rationale behind our Home Learning offer

I thought I would take this opportunity to add some detail to my previous letter on Home Learning.

As in every 'industry', there are different ways of providing a high quality service. We have chosen our offer carefully, and it is based on our pedagogy and experience in an infant school- and it is well thought out. We are extremely proud of our child centred and creative approach to learning which has stood us in good stead over the years, both in terms of child wellbeing and academic standards and Ofsted inspections.

You will be aware, I am sure, that some schools have opted to deliver live online lessons as part of their offer. We have not opted to do this, but instead decided to provide the 'mixed diet' I referred to in my previous letter. As well as a morning video which gives children a starting point to their home learning day, staff are recording video lessons which deliver key teaching points and allow children (supported by their families) to access tasks and challenges. These videos can be watched at a time which works for individual families and can be paused or even re-watched several times, allowing both the adults and children to revisit teaching points at their own speed and in their own way. Staff are also providing engaging videos across the curriculum using music, the humanities, art, DT or PE to motivate and engage your child.

Research by trusted sources such as The Education Endowment Fund has shown that an effective lesson for younger children cannot be replicated by live online lessons, or even our recorded lessons. Teaching methods have changed significantly over the past 20 years and strategies have evolved. We may remember lessons where the teacher 'talked at us' from the front of a class, but the most successful learning has now been proven to include strategies such as 'collaboration' and active tasks where children apply a skill they are learning to a variety of situations. The National Education Union states '*online live lessons are not recommended for primary aged children as teacher-pupil interaction is not easily replicated*'.

As a school, we are however, acutely aware of the pressure the Coronavirus pandemic has put on families. We do understand how disappointed you are as parents to find your children once again unable to attend school and access the full curriculum they deserve. We know you want the very best for your children. We also realise how hard it is to suddenly find yourselves responsible for delivering your child's education whilst juggling the rest of life. Teaching is, and should be, a full time job- and it is a huge burden on families who have other roles and responsibilities. With this in mind, we have deliberately chosen a flexible and varied Home Learning offer which gives parents choice.

Therefore we have chosen to offer some video lessons, some paper based tasks and links to other resources. We know that some families do not have open access to internet and adequate devices and therefore cannot rely on the online part of our offer. Paper based resources will be posted home every two weeks, and additional packs can be provided more frequently whenever they are needed. We will continue

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to try and obtain laptops from the DfE, but currently infant schools are not eligible for this funding. We do have a limited number of data memory cards which Vodafone have sent us.

Finally, I would just like to say something about the team of staff I am very fortunate to work with. Earlier this week, many schools across the country were facing closure as their staff felt unable to come to work due to their fears of working on site during the current surge in Coronavirus cases. However, ALL our staff turned up on Monday 4th January and worked a very long day to ensure we were ready to reopen and welcome every child back into school. When the Government announced on the evening of the same day that a National Lockdown would begin, they all turned up at work the next day and re-planned the term to focus on Home Learning. They contacted every keyworker and vulnerable family and organised learning areas and rotas. They updated resources and began videoing the lessons they had planned to teach in school to their classes. Today we have already welcomed nearly 50 children into school and settled them into their new, year group bubbles.

Over the next few weeks staff will be mainly on site, updating resources, sending out learning packs and uploading lessons and challenges via Tapestry. At the same time, they will be juggling their own lives and concerns around Coronavirus, and many will be educating their own children after the school day has ended.

Please bear this in mind when you offer feedback. We will welcome suggestions and we are happy to explain our professional rationale behind the choices we have made, and support you in every way we can- but please remember we are in this together and my staff are continuing to work hard under difficult circumstances.

Yours in partnership

Anna Pendleton

Headteacher