

Rowlands Gill Primary School

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Dear Parents / Carers

Remote Learning

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for supporting your children to access our remote learning package through the various platforms we are using. I was really pleased to hear from the class teachers that the vast majority of the children were able to access their 'Welcome Back Google Meet' last week and I was fortunate enough to join one of the 6B Meets and see the children on screen engaging with Mr Bell, which was lovely.

As you know, our remote learning plan has been in place since October – it's one thing to have a plan but then to turn that plan into practice has made for an incredibly intense week for the class teachers (and Mrs Mitchell in particular who been supporting all the teachers and many parents).

From tomorrow, the English and Maths 'live' lessons timetable will begin and will hopefully further enhance the remote learning you experienced last week. The 'live' nature of the remote learning plan is the part that causes the most anxiety for myself and the staff because we have very little control over technological failure or what is happening in your house. With this in mind, I just wanted to remind you of the guidelines which you agreed to, for remote learning:

- Children should have their camera turned on where possible so that the teacher can see them and they should have their microphone muted unless they are speaking.
- Children should concentrate on the live lesson and avoid doing other things at the same time, particularly eating as this is very distracting for the other children and staff.
- They should join the Meet at the agreed time and not try to enter it early.
- Parents should be mindful that if they (or anyone in the household) are in the background of where their child is working, that all other children in the Meet will be able to see them and hear them (when the microphone is not muted). In one Meet last week, we all heard a teenager being told off for not doing their work by their Mum (luckily there was no swearing)!
- The Meet will be recorded so that children who could not access it live, can access it at a later point. This recording will be stored in the teacher's Google Drive and will only be available to the members of the class.
- Parents have agreed that they will not share any content from the learning platforms or make comments or remarks about their child's live lessons on social media or other platforms.
- Another member of staff will be a buddy in the live lessons this week to help out if there is a technological hiccup and to make sure the children are all engaging and being seen if they have their hand up etc. The teachers are very nervous about their live lessons, as the delivery of lessons in this way is so different to normal face-to-face delivery and the interaction with the children is so much more limited than it usually would be. What you will see in the live lessons does not and cannot replicate our usual teaching.

Class teachers are more than happy to help you with any queries you have either in general or about a specific piece of work. The best way to request this help is to email the class teacher using the class email address and they will get back to you as soon as possible. It is possible for you to add comments electronically onto the piece of work, but the teacher won't always see this on the same day and I would urge you to use the class email system as your method of contacting teachers.

Last week, teachers were 'marking' the children's work in many different ways but I know that sometimes this has not reached the child. We believe we have ironed out this issue now so that feedback will reach the children. Please remember that it may not be possible to 'mark' all pieces of work and not all work will be responded to in the same way but we will always endeavor to provide feedback to the children even if that is just via the daily register sheet.

Having spoken to a couple of parents last week, and being in the position of having a child at home trying to manage his remote learning (while I am at work and my husband is home working), I know that it is far from easy. I also know that it is human nature to put too much pressure on ourselves and expect too much. We are in the middle of a global pandemic, which at the moment is getting worse, not better, so we need to be realistic in our expectations. If you are finding it difficult to juggle supporting your child, with your own work commitments, please don't worry – your best is good enough. Prioritising the Maths and English work is the most important and don't be afraid to let the class teacher know if this is all you are able to manage.

The Government released some guidance on Thursday afternoon – 3 days after they announced that we needed to be closed! In this guidance they have stipulated that Key Stage 2 children should receive 4 hours per day of work. This is higher than that which they suggested in October and was built into our remote learning plan. In order to meet with this new requirement, you will notice that by the end of this week, the KS2 class teachers will be assigning another subject area to complete every day. However, as previously stated this is not intended to cause additional stress but will ensure that we meet the Government requirements.

Class teachers are expected to monitor children's engagement with remote learning, as per the Government guidance and they will contact you to see how we can help if your child doesn't seem to be engaging. This is not intended to be an additional pressure; we want to work together to ensure your child continues to learn as well as possible.

If you find that you don't have a device which your child can use to access their remote learning or if you have internet issues, such as a limit on your data, please let us know. There are some schemes available for families, who meet certain criteria, to try to help overcome such issues. If you have already discussed this with your child's class teacher, they will have passed that information on to me and we will be in touch this week to see if we can help.

As always, if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me, our office team or the class teachers – we will help in any way we can. Stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Clarke".

Mrs L Clarke
Headteacher