



Rattlesden Cof E Primary Academy
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Headteacher: Mrs Helen Ballam

8th January 2021

Dear Parents,

I writing to you at what seems like the strangest week I have ever known in my career. To open a school, close a school and reopen a school within three days was quite a challenge. But the staff, pupils and parents have all been as great as always.

It is a very sad time for the staff, who have worked incredibly hard in the Autumn Term to get the children back on track and then to face this setback. I can however assure you this time that we are much more prepared for home schooling and have learnt a great deal from the last lockdown, when it was all new to us. Our aim this time is to make the personal communication, teaching and support for your children much improved. You will have hopefully seen the DfE guidance for schools that we are attempting to adhere to. I have also met with the Headteachers in our Trust and others locally to see where we compare, and the range of provision is vast, but we are generally all similar. Too much reliance on IT creates its own problems, especially for larger families, younger pupils, or those who are just not 'wired' that way, so we are aiming to find a balance. I personally think the government expects way too much screen time for the children, which as we know, especially for the youngest pupils is not practical or healthy.

We are also hoping that you feel you can communicate with the class teacher more easily this time. We are also attempting to bring together the whole class more often, such as registration. But this does put additional pressure on parents if it is just not feasible to have your children online at a certain time, so it is early days for this. I would appreciate any feedback regarding this aspect of home schooling.

The staff continue to meet regularly and discuss your children together. We have tried to identify the most vulnerable, and those who struggled socially and emotionally in the last lockdown. We understand that you are anxious and concerned for your children, but if we have too many pupils back in school the impact of the lockdown will be missed, and as I said previously, we have become aware of several families that have positive cases locally.

We also now have had staff that have tested positive from the Christmas holiday, but are now able to return. Unlike some schools, I have endeavoured to have the very least amount of staff in as possible, and trust that the staff that are working from home are able to provide a high standard of home learning. The children who are in school are doing exactly the same work as those at home whenever possible.

Next week we will hold a resource collection again as we did before. If you are new to the school, last lockdown we put out a table with paper, books, stationary etc. You will be able to take what you need to support home learning. Please email the school, or DM the Twitter page to put in any particular requests. If you are struggling with IT, message the office with details.

Resource collection:

Tuesday 12th 10.00-11.00

Thursday 14th 1.00-2.00

Please wear a mask and socially distance.

That's all for this week. Thank you again for all of your kind messages at this difficult time. Please stay safe and stay in touch.

Kind regards,

Mrs Ballam.