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January 5th, 2021

Parents,

As you are no doubt aware, school has moved to remote learning for all year groups other than vulnerable children and the children of key workers. This will last at least until February half term. The prospect of vaccines gives us hope for the future.

Home Learning

It's frustrating and challenging and we would really prefer not to be in this situation, however, we are better prepared for home learning than last spring. The expectations are different for both schools and parents, however, our experience has helped us all understand the importance and benefits of routine, of developing skills through practice and the pleasure of achievement and learning. Great Wood teachers are providing activities for each day – and just as coming to school each day is important, settling down to these tasks each day is important. We recognise that this is a challenge for parents and we will try our best to make things from this side clear.

The two teachers from each year group are planning daily activities together so that the learning sequence each day is the same at school and at home. There is more clarity for learners at home as teachers chunk things into bite sized activities that the children access and respond to through See Saw. Children also now have access to daily reading materials through Reading Bug. We are all mindful that you at home are dealing with a lot and we hope you understand that the teachers are learning new skills. However, for you at home the following will be important:

- If you have access issues, contact your teacher.
- Routines benefit children – knowing that there is free time in 20 min helps focus
- Aim to do the work on the day set
- **Give lots of praise for things that have been done well**
- Include exercise and access to fresh air in your daily routine
- Encourage children to keep in touch with their friends (monitored if on social media)
- Limit gaming and social media screen time
- Read with and to your child(ren) and talk with them about it

The government have made it clear that home learning is not something that families and children can opt out of. Teachers will be checking that there are responses from all the children and following up when there isn't. This will be a challenge for everyone – we know that the home situation is different in every home – and it would really help if you inform teachers, via email, if there are reasons why your child may not be returning work e.g. that they or you are sick. We are making every effort to keep the children's development progressing and parents play a huge part in this. It won't be the same as if we were all at school – but the children will be more on track.

We learned from last time that the social connection between the children really mattered. We will be looking to find a way for a weekly opportunity for classes to see each other and their teacher virtually – bear with us on finding a safe and practical way to do this.

Parent / Teacher Progress 'Meetings'

We have a planned parents evening this half term. As 5 minute on-line meetings won't meet our needs at this challenging time, **Monday February 8th** will be a day for parents and teachers to talk. I am requesting that with a month's notice, key workers make every effort to adjust their

working patterns so the number of children in school on that day are reduced greatly so that teachers can focus on contacting parents. We would have a non-curriculum day, and childcare with teaching assistants provided for children of key worker parents who found it impossible to adjust their working schedule. Numbers will determine if this is possible and then we can plan a schedule.

Access

We are aware that there are many situations where there isn't ideal access at home – shared screens, limited data etc. The vast majority of parents indicated that although their situation wasn't ideal they would manage. We are hoping that the government is able to make a deal with data providers to ensure that data from educational websites, particularly National Oak Academy, is free (The principal of National Oak Academy who happens to be a former Great Wood pupil has been lobbying for this for many months.)

We provided a small number of families with school iPads. Before Christmas, school was able to order our allocation of 14 iPads from the government as we had had a bubble down earlier and they had some stock. These won't arrive until late January and the technician has to install apps etc. Please contact your teacher if you are having access problems and let them know what the problem is – we will do what we can to ensure all children have access to the remote learning.

Children Attending School

Children is open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. We have 91 children in school today.

New reception families and families who didn't access the key worker child care last year have been asked to provide evidence of key worker status. We may contact previous users to confirm current status. It may be that there will be a change from key worker access to "Essential and Critical Workers" with new checks needed.

As it is now understood that although schools are considered safe places for children they are 'vectors for infection transmission' and the aim of the lockdown is to get the spread of infection under control to save lives and prevent long term debilitating health problems, we wish to minimise the number of children in school when children can be safely cared for at home. **We really appreciate families with a key worker parent choosing to keep children home when they can.** With daily learning plans being the same for home and school it is possible to be in school part time.

School Times

As we now know this is a longer term change and we have children arriving at different times into the same class, please see the NEW start and end of the day times to begin Wednesday Jan 6th. These are the times when the doors open. There is no point coming early. Doors close after a 5-minute window and any late pupils will need to go to the Main Office.

	Start Time	End Time	
Reception	8:45am	3:05pm	No change for Acorn children
Year 1	8:50am	3:10pm	No change for 1L
Year 2	8:45am	3:05pm	No change for Year 2
Year 3	8:55am	3:15pm	No change for Year 3
Year 4	8:45am	3:05pm	No change for 4H
Year 5	8:50am	3:10pm	No change for 5C
Year 6	8:55am	3:15pm	Time rather than a window for Year 6

Sunrise and Sunset Club



Usual times and usual ways of booking. During the first lockdown we furloughed the staff, backfilled the staffing with teaching assistants and levied no charge. With key workers numbers as they are there isn't capacity to backfill staffing. As we can't furlough the staff the income is needed so charges will be as normal. With much reduced numbers it will operate at a loss but the decision has been made to keep the service available to key workers.

Free School Meal Provision

The appropriate parents have been contacted. Schools are asked to arrange for deliveries of 'hampers' of food rather than the FSM vouchers or the Sainsbury's Card we used. Luckily the Morecambe Food Bank are assisting us and we are ordering 'hampers' to be delivered weekly to appropriate families.

Managing Risk

We have a duty of care to all the adults and children in school. We are reviewing our risk assessment and there may have to be further changes. However, we are all aware of the main messages, Hands, Face and Space. It is really important that before and after school parents stay distant, even walking to and from school.

Thank you for your understanding. This too will pass

John Ross
Headteacher