

Friday 22nd January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

It's not been the start of term that we were all anticipating/hoping for, as once again we have moved into a lockdown, with a move to remote learning.

I write both as a parent and as the Chair of School Standards Board (SSB), when I extend my thanks and gratitude to all the teachers and staff at school who have worked with minimum notice to move their teaching online. I think you'll agree that the introduction of daily live lessons, building on the provision of pre-recorded lessons provided during the first lockdown, makes such a difference to the children; not only do they now see their friends, but they also have the chance to interact with their teachers.

For those of us at home supporting our child(ren) with their learning we certainly recognise the skills, patience and incredible aptitude that our teachers demonstrate every day. After all, if children could learn new concepts without specific teaching, we wouldn't need teachers. The teachers have spent hours putting together things to send home and they have done, and continue to do, their very best. All staff have been working long hours to enable as much remote learning as possible, while also providing meaningful feedback on work that pupils have submitted. Conversations are continually taking place to look at how to further enhance the provision for every individual, while ensuring there is the capacity to deliver this and provide the human resources needed for those children attending in school provision, while ensuring risks can be minimised as far as possible.

You will have seen in the media that there have been many daily updates from the government regarding the provision and what is required from the school. I am extremely proud of our staff team, who have put the politics and the media aside, and turned their full concentration to responding to these updates to ensure the very best for the pupils in their care, whether they are onsite or whether they are completing remote learning from home. Strong leadership and excellent support from the school office team has ensured that the pupils have remained the focus of everyone's efforts at all times.

Please can I thank each and every one of you for truly considering your eligibility for "critical key worker" places at school and for keeping children at home, where possible. The spirit of the school provision is to provide care/supervision for children whose parents are key workers (away from the home) and where learning from home isn't possible. Not only is the risk of COVID transmission higher with more children in school, but this also results in less capacity to further enhance the remote learning opportunities for all children until the school re-opens fully.

For those of you with children of different ages at home, and for those of you also trying to juggle your own daily work requirements, you may well ask how you can get everything done. The answer is you need to be realistic with your expectations and as long as you are doing your best, that is all anyone can ask of you. Please do make contact with your child(ren)'s teachers if you need some support for your child(ren), as the school team are there to help where needed.

You are supporting your child(ren) through the most difficult circumstances. Please remember to look after yourself too and accept what is in your circle of control. The school makes the provision of resources and provides the framework/structure of the lessons to follow at home as much as you can. It has tried to get the right balance between live lessons with fixed timings and pre-recorded sessions which give you a degree of greater flexibility to find the timings that work for you as a family. The school will continue to build on the provision and fix any teething problems as we go along, but do continue to provide constructive feedback to the school office (or via the GLF form) on what is or isn't working for you. Further enhancing the provision is only possible if staffing allows and I would urge you to be patient if things are introduced and then disappear for a while, before returning. The team really are working to their full capacity, and staff absence due to contracting COVID can result in short term scaling back or changes to the offering and we thank you for your understanding over this.

These are exceptionally difficult times, and we all have a role to play in continuing to educate our child(ren). I wish you all continued good health and look forward to staying in touch in the coming months to update you on the strategic direction of the school, where we continue to want the best for all pupils at Floreat Wandsworth, with everyone working in partnership to achieve this.

Warm wishes



Mills Brough
Chair of the Floreat Wandsworth SSB