



Academic Year 2021-2022

Dear Parents and carers

I am writing to inform you about our contingency plan for the different scenarios we could (and have) found ourselves in over the coming months. The Government has given school a set of expectations around remote learning and this is how the team at Holmesdale are responding to them.

All the staff have discussed the whole school aspirations whilst considering the implications of Government expectations. The practicalities of maintaining a fully operational school, alongside the additional requirements of remote learning require careful planning and resourcing. Our aim is to provide a solution that is effective and efficient. We have utilised some of the Covid Catch-up Fund to purchase resources that will help your children master skills, in the event that they need to be educated at home, including technology, software and training.

The information that follows is a detailed account of our plans so you are fully informed. Of course, no plan is watertight and in this ever-changing Covid world, we may have to make some amendments along the way!

Brief Summary

For those of you that just want the main headlines;

- **For individual pupils isolating at home**, while school is open, we are providing support via email or 'Evidence Me' on an individual basis. This work will be sent by your class teacher (unless they are ill in which case another teacher will step in). It will follow the same curriculum planning as in school and be appropriate for your child.
- **For whole classes, bubbles and schools isolating**, we are providing teacher-taught lessons in the form of a pre-recorded video for maths, English and phonics. When appropriate it will also be for some of our topic lessons. We will also offer some online discussions for both pupils and parents. We will use our online learning platform 'Evidence Me', Zoom and the school website.
- **You can help by making sure you have access to the internet and a device in your house** or letting school know if this isn't the case – this situation will be going on for a while and having the right tools for the job are essential!

We have and continue to work hard to implement these changes. We know that we are asking families once again to possibly support children at home with their learning. We also know that using ICT to support this is not easy for everybody but it is what the government are expecting us to use to keep our curriculum going both in school and at home. We have chosen where possible to continue to use the platforms that you all adapted quickly to through lock down, rather than getting you to find your way around new systems. We are aware that there have been some teething troubles; please do keep trying it is important that you are signed up. Remember we are here to help if you need us.

Please remember that at times staff are not only planning and teaching in school they are also supporting you at home. They are of course very happy to do this but you may not always get feedback/support straight away.

We will survey parents in the coming weeks asking for feedback, once everything is up and running,

The Reasons Behind Our Plan

Alongside the government expectations, which are laid out in the guidance for the full reopening of schools, we are keen to make sure that the good work done to fill any gaps created by lockdown continues if a child has to self-isolate. For this reason, we are keen to employ remote learning strategies that continue to focus on the basics – maths, English, phonics and reading and consolidate core learning ensuring that pupils can continue to move forward when they return to school.

One of the key things we have tried to take into account is the changing nature of this situation. We have to prepare for a return to normality but be ready for further disruption. We have selected technological solutions because they provide us with an increased ability to communicate and learn. We understand this might not suit everyone but we know from the lock down in the spring that most families engaged positively with our online learning. We will continue to support any families who are experiencing any difficulties.

Internet and technology access

The activities pupils will complete will be in the real world (on paper!) as well as online. However, considering that this situation may well remain a reality for the foreseeable future, we need to be able to do this electronically. The use of technology will also allow remote learning to be responsive and will connect school and home much more readily.

The staff have embraced these new technologies and are now ready to create videos for you to use at home. The resources are very user friendly and should not need much support at all when in use e.g. not all work will need printing, children can answer questions from the screen without printing out many sheets of paper and once you are logged on to the platforms they are very straightforward to use.

We have tried to make sure that the resources we have selected will all run on a variety of devices so the overwhelming majority of laptops and tablets will be fine.

We will have a very small number of devices that can be taken home during isolation, and we will make them available to families who have absolutely no way of accessing to the resources home, but we don't have enough devices for every child. Therefore, if your child has a device, or you can provide one for them, it will help other families to have the capacity to make sure no child is disadvantaged when learning from home.

Why aren't we live streaming lessons?

Infant classrooms are complex places and there are many elements of classroom life which are not appropriate for sharing; safeguarding, professional freedom and professional dignity are a few examples of where potential difficulties with live streaming of lessons may lie.

We feel that for infant children sitting at home trying to follow a live lesson, it would be challenging when not actually sat in the classroom with the teacher, experiencing all the things that are happening in that room. We also know that for young children learning at home is very reliant on parents, so we want the pre-recorded lessons to give you the parents some insight into what is being taught. This in turn should provide some support and confidence for you to learn with your child.

Resources

If we have to revert to the bubble system due to rising case numbers or there is a further full school lock down, work will be made available on a daily basis on 'Evidence Me'. Pre-recorded lessons will be put on the school website. You will be able to feedback and ask for support on a one to one basis with your class teacher through 'Evidence Me'. You will also be able to upload work done by the children for feedback. Teachers will direct you towards which pieces of work they would like to see.

Teacher/ Pupil Check-ins

We will have live check-in sessions with smaller groups of pupils or whole classes on ZOOM. These will happen if a whole bubble is closed and will take place once or twice a week at a time convenient to the majority. They will provide an opportunity for pupils to see and talk to their teachers and also for parents ask for any guidance or support that they might need.

Again, this is a lot of information. Our hope is that we do not need to resort to these plans very often but as we complete this, we are already experiencing a bubble closure.

All the staff at Holmesdale are working tirelessly to provide an education that is filling gaps to help children catch up, whilst trying to provide a broad and fun filled curriculum that is safe for all, while trying to educate those in school and those at home at the same time. Please do try to understand and be patient when things perhaps do not go quite to plan or as fast as you would like or the ICT gremlins mess things up for us. Please do stay in touch and ask for help if you need it. We are always here!

