



Head: Lucy Miles

Tel: 01608 683642

Email: office.2104@great-tew.oxon.sch.uk

Great Tew Primary School
Great Tew
Chipping Norton
Oxfordshire
OX7 4DB

Friday 8th January 2021

Dear parents/carers

Well what an extraordinary week this has been – quite possibly the most challenging at school since last March. As we reach the end of the week, I look back with pride on what has been achieved, thanks to many months of planning to prepare for this eventuality. I am so impressed with every single member of staff. They moved heaven and earth following a government U-turn at 8pm on Monday evening to switch to remote learning for the majority and open school safely to the children of key workers. On Monday evening staff were given the option, by myself and governors, of taking Tuesday to acclimatise to this sudden and dramatic change in direction, but together they decided that, no, they wanted to be back supporting the children from 9am on Tuesday, and they were.

Informed by the experience of the previous school closure – what worked in remote learning and what didn't, how different year groups respond to the challenge of learning at home (as you can appreciate this varies greatly from reception through to Year 6), and the knowledge our staff have of your children, their learning and their development, we have alongside teaching children both in school and away from school this week, been refining the remote learning strategy (content and infrastructure) to scale up from next week. More on the detail of this from me in a separate email over the weekend.

More than anything the teaching staff want to make sure your children continue to make progress building on the very good progress that was made last term, as a result of the exceptionally hard work of both teachers and children. The overwhelming feeling amongst those staff I spoke to on Monday night was one of sadness: sadness that the children would once more be away from school and that their learning would once more be disrupted. We all know that learning remotely is simply not the same as learning in school and it is widely acknowledged that remote learning for the younger years in primary schools is a particular challenge. Young children simply find it much harder to learn via a screen, the face-to-face interaction with their teacher in a classroom being a key part of a successful learning experience. The remote learning provision for different age groups will necessarily look different.

As this week draws to a close and teachers head home for a weekend of planning for the coming weeks, I ask for your kindness, your support and your patience as we continue to meet the greatest challenge to face the teaching profession in decades. As a school we are always mindful in our approach to your children's learning and their wider school experience – and remote learning will not be any different. We will not rush into approaches we know will simply not work with particular year groups – we will base what we do on many years of teaching experience, proven best practice in remote learning and our in-depth knowledge of the children.

I understand that Mondays' announcement, though perhaps inevitable, will have been a devastating one for many of you and that you will be concerned about the impact of more time out of school on your children. It is particularly hard, we know, for those of you who are working from home, trying to juggle the challenges of a job with overseeing your children's learning and I thank you for all you are doing. I would like to finish by reassuring you that we will do all that we can to keep the life of the school going in as much as we are able and support both you and your children through this challenging time until we are back together again.

I hope you and your children enjoy the weekend and I will be in touch with more information in due course.

Best wishes

Mrs Lucy Miles