

Eastlea update 22/1/21

Dear Parents / Carers,

The end of the third week of the latest national lockdown and there is still no update regarding a return date to schools. Although there are things being hinted at or suggested in the media there is nothing definite. Experience tells me that we need to avoid trying to second guess what may or may not be decided. As soon as we have a clear message I will let you know.

Until then it is important that we all continue to follow the lockdown rules to prevent the spread of this vicious virus by not mixing with others outside of our household, maintaining social distance, washing our hands regularly and only going out if it is essential.

Primary school staff Covid testing

As per DfE/NHS guidelines staff will soon have the option of taking part in Covid lateral flow testing which is being rolled out for all primary schools. Testing all staff without symptoms will support schools to continue to operate and also help to break chains of transmission. There is quite a lot for staff to take on board with this approach, but it is something we will hopefully be starting to put in place by the end of next week.

What are staff busy with at Eastlea?

Staff are continuing the unenviable task of balancing the provision of remote learning for the vast majority of pupils who are at home whilst at the same time being in school every day to teach those who need to be in the class bubbles – the children of key workers or those deemed vulnerable. There are some children in each class who are being taught on a daily basis by their class based teachers/support staff. **I know how grateful the staff have been to receive some of the feedback and messages of support from parents/carers who appreciate the time and effort this is taking. THANK YOU!**

Home learning and Seesaw/Tapestry update

Meanwhile we know how hard you are working at home to keep your children going with their tasks/activities. For those enjoying – or wrestling with(?) – remote learning, we are aware how the dialogue between staff who are responding to work submitted by pupils can lead to a lot of 'notifications' via Seesaw/Tapestry. It is possible to turn off the notifications within account settings if this helps, so you can just check them at a convenient time!

We advise that the children remember to check their inbox when they do switch on their device each day so they don't miss any updates,, messages or feedback from their teachers.

New Year Hopes and Wishes competition



We had some fantastic entries for our New Year 'hopes and wishes' competition. 70 entries were submitted – some from children in school but most from pupils at home – often involving wider family groups! We had collages, pictures, paintings, photographs, IT based work, books, albums, cards and balloons!!

Choosing winners was not easy but well done to those who were chosen from each class – and I hope they enjoyed their goody bags which were delivered this week!

Their work now features on an eye catching display in the main entrance and Dorothy Pearl (governor) has donated **£70** to school funds as promised...£1 per entry! This total was then doubled to **£140** as Sheila O'Neil (another governor) said she would match it too! We can't wait to decide what to spend the money on for the children when we are all back – thank you!

DfE Laptops

On Monday this week we were able to allocate laptops to some children who had been struggling to access Seesaw via their devices at home. This has been warmly welcomed by the pupils/parents concerned and, in most cases, has led to a real increase in their ability to engage with the online learning. Fantastic! If you feel this is something that might be of benefit to you then please let your child's class teacher know and we will see what we can do to help.

Northumberland County Council Resource 'padlets'

The last thing we want to do is 'bombard' people with information, but this week we have been signposted to some resources on the NCC website to support with Home Learning. If you wish to take a look then please follow these links:

- **Ideas packs** for primary (and secondary) pupils which may be of interest to parents/carers of pupils in different classes

Primary

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Document-store/COVID%20resources/New-Home-learning-for-KS1-and-KS2.pdf>

Secondary

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Document-store/COVID%20resources/Secondary-Version-Home-learning-Pack.pdf>

- The School Improvement Team have also updated their 'padlets' of home and **school learning resources**. These can be found at:

https://nlandeducation.padlet.org/gill_finch2/home

https://nlandeducation.padlet.org/gill_finch2/parents

- Meanwhile the **Early Years** Team have developed a 'padlet' with key documents and 'learning together at home' activities, which can be found at:

<https://padlet.com/clairrealisonjohnson/ufqivcbbe0ck>

And finally...finding ways to stay active

We hope that despite the wintry/wet weather you and your children are finding ways to remain active and keep cheerful! There are lots of ways that this can be achieved and I know there are regular updates sent out via Facebook or on Seesaw/Tapestry about activities you may want to get involved with.

Recent opportunities have included **Virtual Jillates – Pilates with Jill**, **Youth Sport Trust** after school sports clubs, **Active Northumberland** live daily workouts, **Dance Sparks**, **Chance to Shine Cricket** and the Northumberland **Castles Challenge!!** We hope you find something that inspires you to get involved!

Please feel free to contact us with any issues you may have with access to learning or how best to engage your child/maintain their momentum with the work they do at home. Or anything else that we can support with in general!

Look after yourselves, follow the national guidelines, take care and stay safe!

Miss E Beeston, Head Teacher

