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Dear Parents

I thought I would write to you with some more information about remote learning and address some of the queries we have been getting.

As I have said before, we are never going to please everyone and what works for one family will not work for others. We have tried to find a platform, Seesaw, which works for us and families. I appreciate that other schools use other platforms - many use Seesaw too, but as I am sure you can understand why, I am not going to invest in something new now. It is important to remember that remote learning does not mean digital learning – there is a difference.

Use of Seesaw

Printing off Sheets

We do not expect sheets to be printed off. In school we use our class interactive whiteboards as a screen and the children are used to copying from the board. Seesaw allows for this to be done too – they can just use the screen or which ever device they are using as just that, a screen. Most of the children, even those in Yr 1 can copy some things from a board.

Even in school, for some of our children, we would take what is on the screen or sheet and copy it in to the child's book. You can also do that – many of the sheets are a 'base' a 'template' and do not need to be done on the exact sheet. Please do not spend time re-sizing boxes.

The learning does not have to be 'online' on the screen and we have never expected it to all be done that way. It had been our plan to send every child home with an exercise book this term to complete homework in and to have if needed. If you need an exercise book you can contact the school office and we will arrange a time for you to collect one.

Once the work has been completed on paper or in a book, then just take a picture of it and upload it to Seesaw under the right piece of work set. The teachers will still mark it.

Devices

Seesaw can be accessed through some Smart TVs – it may depend on the make so I cannot guarantee it works on all. Your child can then use the television as a screen but complete the work on paper. Sometimes it is easier to access Apps through Playstations or X-Boxes so you could try this.

Work Packs

The teachers will organise packs of work for collection each Monday if your child cannot access Seesaw to complete most of the work. The work set is the same as will be set on Seesaw so is not extra. The work can be returned the following week and will be marked for then too.

If your child has one of these packs, we do not expect to see them completing the same work on Seesaw as that means it will be marked twice.

Going Forward

As you can appreciate the teachers are improving their knowledge and use of Seesaw each week. Some staff are very confident in using it and others are less sure. We are picking up how we can improve our use of the platform and other resources and are planning staff training to cover all of these areas. Most teachers had used Seesaw for homework last term but delivering daily lessons is completely different. Lessons and activities have to be planned and set in a way that is totally different to how they would be delivered in a classroom.

We are looking to use Zoom so that we move from weekly class meetings to having small group sessions on a regular basis with one of the year group teachers. This will depend on the age of the children, and the focus of each group session will change each week depending on what has been picked up on from the work uploaded. When the teachers have organised the sessions your child will be alerted through Seesaw.

The teachers are recording more instructions and teaching and this means that this can be accessed at any time by all the pupils – if it was a live lesson then not everyone would be able to access the learning and the teachers would then have to pre-record the lesson and teach it live.

Live lessons are not seen by Ofsted as the 'Gold Standard' and for once I do agree with them. There are many ways of doing remote learning and Ofsted recognise that worksheets and textbooks can at times be better than teaching a live online lesson.

'6: Live lessons aren't always best' – Quote from Ofsted

Some think that a live lesson is the 'gold standard' of remote education. This isn't necessarily the case. Live lessons have a lot of advantages. They can make curriculum alignment easier,

and can keep pupils' attention, not least as the teacher has more control over the learning environment. But live lessons are not always more effective than asynchronous approaches.

There are some specific difficulties in doing live lessons. It can be hard to build in interaction and flexibility. This means that giving feedback can actually be less effective than when we use recorded lesson segments followed by interactive chats, or tasks and feedback. Using recorded lessons produced externally can allow you to easily draw on high-quality lessons taught by expert subject teachers. The challenge here can be to make sure they are integrated with the curriculum.

Because evidence suggests that concentration online is shorter than the length of a typical lesson, filming a classroom lesson may be ineffective.

Different approaches to remote education suit different types of content and pupils. Mixed models may be effective in some cases. For example, you could use the so-called 'flipped learning' model. In this, new content is taught through an asynchronous recorded lesson. Practice, tutoring and feedback are then done synchronously.'

Ofsted does like its jargon, and I have learnt some new words and phrases reading their document (have included a link below for you to read the whole thing) but asynchronous means if recorded it can be viewed at any time and then synchronously would mean that it can be given at the time of asking. Your child can watch any video or pre-recorded instructions at a time that suits you both and then, when they complete the work, the teacher can feedback to them as it is done.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education#live-lessons-arent-always-best>

If every teacher was doing live lessons from school at the same time our WiFi would collapse. We have to space out our 30min Zoom class meetings so that they do not clash - and this allows siblings to access everything too. I am not sure how many of you have the WiFi capability to allow more than one of your children to live stream lessons at the same time.

I am not ruling live lessons out but at the moment it is not something we are set up to do.

Completing Work

The work will stay on Seesaw for a week once it has been set. When the week is up it will be archived so the expectation is that it will be completed each day in most cases. If for some reason your child does not complete the work on the day set, please let the office know if they are ill. If they just haven't done it, then they will have a week to do so. Much of the work follows on from each day and so most will need completing in the correct order.

The teachers, in particular those in KS2, will message the children if work needs improving or re-doing and will use class Zoom meetings to reinforce school expectations.

Useful Links

We will continue to send out any links to websites or resources that we find. Below is a link to parent information and activities for children on the CEOPs site which provides support and education about online safety. It would be worth you looking at these first to see what is suitable for your child and also knowing about what is being covered in case they ask any questions.

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/?utm_source=Thinkuknow&utm_campaign=c96a649dde-TUK_GLOBAL_12_11_20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-c96a649dde-64777761

White Rose Maths have booklets for each maths topic covered each term available on their website. Link below. These are PDFs so if you cannot print them you can again use them as a template and copy out questions for your child to do. On their website there are links to other resources too.

<https://whiterosemaths.com/parent-workbooks/>

And Finally . . .

There are going to be days when you and your child are just not going to get everything done. There will be things your child doesn't get or doesn't want to do; quite often the 'doesn't get' is a good reason not to do something!

The National Curriculum is hard, what your child is learning now is much higher in terms of expectations than when you were in school. The Yr 2 children are doing work that used to be set for Yr4s and this shift in demand goes across the school.

Do what works for you and your family. When the children came back in September, yes there were some gaps in their learning, but these were not huge. When we assessed the children there wasn't a significant drop in their scores and by the end of the Autumn term most were back to where they should have been. If you do what you can over the next few weeks the children will pick things back up when in school.

As trying as these times are for everyone, we all need to ensure that our children feel safe and happy. They do not need to hear that they are doomed in terms of their futures that their lives will be forever ruined – the messages the media and some professionals give our children are far from positive. It is no wonder our children in this country often come bottom in terms of rankings of happiness and mental wellbeing. I am hoping that the 'powers that be' may realise that teaching children what the past progressive form of a verb is isn't essential – you can be a good writer without knowing that! You can be a happy, successful person without knowing that. A very small bit of the Curriculum I know, but I can list more examples; but this letter would be very long if I did.

If you do have any general questions I am happy to help; questions about a task need to go to the teacher via Seesaw. If you don't want your child to see the question please contact the office.

Please take care, do what you can when you can.

Yours sincerely

K. Gwynn