

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter

September 18th 2020 Volume 3



COVID-19 and the Local Lockdown

The national rise in the number of cases that has resulted since schools fully reopened earlier this month was inevitable. Well over 1000 schools have had to close bubbles so far and fortunately we have not been in that position yet. It has been disappointing to see that the number of cases has risen so dramatically in the North East region and this has resulted in the imposition of local restrictions. At the time of writing, no Ox Close pupils or staff members have tested positive and I hope that this provides some reassurance to concerned parents. Some of the rules around the local restrictions are currently unclear, in particular those with regard to 'informal childcare'. Last night, I wrote to the local MP to seek clarification on this matter and I know that several MPs are lobbying ministers. I do hope that common sense prevails.

Testing

If you or anyone in your family are displaying COVID-19 symptoms then the following link is useful in order for you to be able to book a test: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Alternatively, you can also call 119. Under these circumstances, please keep us informed. Thank you.

From a school perspective, we must follow the guidance. This guidance states that if a child shows one or more symptoms that they must go home and can only return when they have had a negative test. We appreciate that this is difficult, especially given the situation with testing. However, the priority has to be to try to restrict the spread of the virus and to do our best to keep everyone safe. We have sent home an information leaflet for parents tonight and I hope that this is useful.

Social Distancing

We appreciate all of the parents help with social distancing at the gates and request that you continue to be mindful of this.

Newsletters

Just a reminder, that as well as sending out paper copies, we always save our newsletters online in case you ever lose the newsletter and need to refer to it. You can find newsletters at <http://www.ox-close.durham.sch.uk/parents/school-newsletters/>

Star of the Week

Due to COVID-19, we are not holding assemblies at the moment and we are looking into ways of managing this digitally, including the purchase of cameras and microphones. In the meantime, we are very keen to continue to celebrate the achievements of our wonderful children. As such, we have made Star of the Week awards this week and Miss Bowden has been to each class to hand over the awards and to take photographs for the school Facebook page. Well done to all of the winners!

Class Charts

I am delighted to announce our first Class Charts winners of the week, including our first ever winner in Reception. In Reception, Daisy B gathered the most points while our top scorer this week in 1/2 was Sebastian A. In Key Stage 2 Alice C scored highest in 3/4 and Laila D was the top scorer in 5/6.

Water Bottles and Snacks

Please could we remind you to send a water bottle to school with your child every day. Children may also bring a healthy snack for playtime if they wish, which they will be asked to keep in their coat pocket until playtime. This can be either a piece of fruit or a plain biscuit. Fruit is available daily for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Chocolate snacks, sweets and fizzy drinks are not permitted to be consumed in school, in accordance with our Healthy Schools initiative. Thank you for your continued support.

Virtual Classroom

Our Virtual Classroom continues to be available on our school website. There are some children, that as we go through the term, may need to self-isolate for numerous reasons. To ensure that these children are still learning whilst at home, we will upload planning on a weekly basis. These plans contain suggested activities to complete with your child and links to useful websites. In addition, we are also making arrangements to COVID-proof our curriculum in case of further significant longer-term lockdowns. More information will follow.

Musicworks Keyboard Lessons

A leaflet is going out tonight to children in years 3 to 6 with information about keyboard lessons which are taught in school. If you are interested you can apply online at www.musicworksnorthern.co.uk or call Musicworks on 07306 257315.

Attendance

Despite the particular challenges of COVID-19, our attendance has been excellent since the beginning of term. I would like to thank parents for their support with this and also to pay tribute to the children and the staff.

RB, 1/2P and 5/6T had the highest attendance this week with 100%. The overall school attendance this year is 97.5% while this week it has been 98.1%. The threshold for what is termed as persistent absence has been determined as 90%. **Unfortunately, we are also unable to authorise term time holidays as we have to follow the Government and Durham County protocol. The Durham County protocol explains that penalty notices must be issued 'in instances of unauthorised holidays in term time (where the holiday gives rise to 7 days or more unauthorised absence in any period...).** The school processes absences and then the County Council pick up on unauthorised absence. The Government have now reinstated fines for unauthorised absences and their expectation is that all children will attend school.

Dates for the Diary

Friday 23 rd October 2020	School closes for half term
October Half Term	
Monday 2 nd November 2020	Children back to school
Wednesday 18 th November 2020	Flu Vaccination Day
Monday 23 rd , Tuesday 24 th and Wednesday 25 th November 2020	Parent Consultation Evenings – these will be held virtually and more information will follow.
Monday 30th November 2020	PD Day – School Closed
Friday 18 th December 2020	School closes for Christmas holidays
Christmas Holidays	
Monday 4th January 2021	PD Day – School Closed
Tuesday 5 th January 2021	Children back to school

A Bowden

Miss A Bowden
Head of School

D Harrison

Mr D Harrison
Executive Headteacher