

# Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

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## **Virtual Learning: Parent Survey**

**Link to Survey:** <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5Y7J9QR>

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our Virtual Learning Parent Survey on Survey Monkey so far. It was especially important that we gathered your thoughts now that we are 4 weeks into the half term and also following the announcement that the current lockdown will last until at least March 8<sup>th</sup>. Although we only sent the survey out yesterday, the response was immediate. We read every single one and take all comments on board. The survey feedback so far is exceptionally positive and we are humbled by many of the comments. It is heartening to know that parents acknowledge that we are doing the very best that we can to deal with a situation which is far from ideal. The staff deserve every credit for working incredibly hard and taking on new procedures and practices as we have tried to adapt to the situation and make the experience as normal as it can be for the children. It is a particular challenge to manage teaching children in school, while also teaching children who are not in school and to try and ensure that there is no overlap between live teaching across 4 phases of learning! The live teaching is something which does make a difference to learning and it also makes the job of being a working from home, home schooling parent a little less impossible! I have a perspective on this as a parent, as well as a teacher and so understand fully the challenges which the situation is presenting to families. There are many Primary Schools where they are not able to provide live teaching down to a variety of factors and the Ox Close staff deserve every credit. From the outset of the pandemic, it was clear to me that this live teaching would be needed at Ox Close. What I can say with certainty is that we are doing all that we can but that we will take on board all comments and continue to try to improve what we do. The survey remains open and we look forward to analysing the results and trying to make our offer even stronger in order to benefit the children.

## **Virtual Classroom**

Please remember that all of the planning is here for you to access:

<http://www.ox-close.durham.sch.uk/virtual-classroom/weekly-plans/>

It is updated every Friday afternoon with the planning and resources for the week after. There is an explanation of what task the children have to complete for every lesson

## **YouTube Learning Videos: Mrs Harvey**

Mrs Harvey has also recorded some more fantastic Geography, History and RE videos for children who are in Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4 and 5 and 6. We asked Mrs Harvey to begin producing these in September and she has done a great job. These short videos are on our YouTube channel and offer the key points covered during the input by the teacher. Please check them out, I am sure that they will be useful. Teachers may also use some of them as an aide in their wider curriculum lessons. Please follow the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz-cgNhnaE1qUhwllq-UNCw/playlists>

## **Connecting the Community**

From the outset of the pandemic, our objectives were to maintain learning but also to attempt to maintain the Ox Close community. This has resulted in some innovative measures such as the Ox Close Beat, the VE Day celebrations, Facebook challenges, Harvest Hearts, our amazing Whole School Christmas performance, the Ox Close podcasts and Miss Bowden's recent assemblies. As you know, we are always trying to think of ways in which we can improve further and over the coming weeks we will be introducing further ideas. I am keen to find time to meet the Children's Leadership Team virtually and I am going to send invites out over the course of the next week. One thing which we will discuss is the possibility of holding Eggs Factor this year and I know that this would be something which the children would enjoy. In addition, I have also been speaking to Mark Solan and I am hoping that he will be able to join us for a Teams assembly soon. We will be launching another competition - one which everyone will be welcome to get involved with. Watch this space!

## Children's Mental Health Week 2021

It is Children's Mental Health Week 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> February. This year's theme is 'Express Yourself'. An 'Express Yourself' calendar with suggested creative activities will be on the school website. It can be found in the Virtual Classroom, in the Mental Health and Wellbeing section. Any activities children complete can be photographed and shared with their class teacher via Seesaw. There will also be some relaxation exercises to try out.

### Virtual Coffee Morning

Another way in which we are planning to reach out is through Virtual Coffee Mornings for parents. Miss Bewick, our PSA/Attendance Manager is hoping to hold these over the coming weeks. The idea would be that she will host the meeting, a little bit like Miss Bowden does with the assemblies currently, except that the Virtual Coffee Mornings are for the parents. This would be an opportunity to chat informally on Teams to each other and to Miss Bewick. Here is a link to the Survey Monkey to gather your thoughts and to see if there is demand: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5TQKQLB> Miss Bewick would also like me to share her email address with you so that you can contact her directly: [r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk](mailto:r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk). Please feel free to get in touch with her about this or any other matters with which she would normally deal with during more normal times!

### Assemblies

This week, Miss Bowden has continued her programme of virtual assemblies as we continue to strive to connect the Ox Close community and these continue to be a tremendous success. Miss Bowden will continue with the assemblies next week. The days and times are as follows:

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	Thursday at 2pm
Years 3. 4. 5 and 6	Friday at 9:30am

Next week, we are thrilled that the Reverend Matt Tarling will also be delivering some for us.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	Wednesday at 2pm
Years 3. 4. 5 and 6	Wednesday at 9:30am

Your child will just need to log in in the usual way. On the Class Channel, a link will appear just before the assembly that will say 'Click to Join'.

### Drop off and Pick up

We respectfully ask that only one parent accompanies the children to and collects the children from school. In addition, in the interests of minimising the risk of the spread of the virus, we ask that parents do not arrive early at school and that they leave as soon as they collect the children. While schools do not have jurisdiction over parents off site, the advice from Durham County Council is that parents may choose to wear a face covering or mask if they feel as though it is difficult to maintain social distancing at the school gate. **We do require visitors to the office to wear a mask at this time, just as they would be asked to wear one in a shop or garage.** Thank you for your continued co-operation and for working with us to slow the spread of the virus, something which is especially important at this point in time.

### Controlling the spread of the virus

The Government decision to restrict school access to key workers and vulnerable children only was as part of the effort to control the spread of the virus. As has been the case since the outset, we have a number of measures in place in school to help mitigate against the spread but ultimately COVID-19 is a community virus. In order to help control the spread of the virus, we ask if key worker parents can continue to only send the children into school if it is essential to do so - i.e. there are no safe alternative arrangements at home. Thank you for your continued support with this.

### COVID-19

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 if your child has been in school. It is also important that if anyone in your household, child or adult, displays symptoms or has a test all within the household self isolates. This means that, even if children are eligible to attend, all siblings who live with a child or adult who is displaying symptoms should not attend school until the end of the self-isolation period or after the affected person has had a negative test. Please check by calling the school office if you are unsure. Thank you.

*A Bowden*

Miss A Bowden  
Head of School

*D Harrison*

Mr D Harrison  
Executive Headteacher