

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



March 12th 2021 Volume 24

Back Together

It has been incredible to see all of the children physically back together this week. We were all aware of how much the children were looking forward to seeing all of their friends and the staff have loved seeing them interacting together. It is fair to say that there has been a buzz around the school and the enthusiasm of the children certainly provides a lift to everyone! The way that we managed the remote learning and the way that parents supported has given us the best opportunity of minimising lost learning. This week has been all about settling the children back in and getting back to conventional classroom learning. Between now and Easter, we will be carrying out assessments to allow us to plan and organise learning and catch up programmes at an appropriate level.

Great Staff

I would like to acknowledge the commitment, skill, bravery and dedication of the staff this week as we have opened to all pupils. School staff are only human and are not immune from the difficult global circumstances which we are all experiencing at the moment. While our Risk Assessments and our organisation minimise risks for all, COVID is a community virus. As has been widely publicised, school staff and other key workers have not been prioritised for vaccines and as most of our staff are in younger age groups, very few of us have been vaccinated or are due to be vaccinated imminently. However, the staff have really stepped up and shown what a magnificent team they are once again this week. Their motivation is always to provide the very best care and learning for pupils and they have done a brilliant job this week - this includes all support staff, caretakers, cleaners, lunch supervisors and office staff as well as the teachers and teaching assistants.

Birthday Parties

At the end of the autumn term, we held a birthday party for all of the children who had had a birthday in that term. The children were allowed to come into school in their own clothes and had the party. We will be having the same arrangement for the children who have had their birthday this term. Further details will follow - watch this space!

Eggs Factor

We are delighted to be holding our Eggs Factor once again this year. The full re-opening of school has certainly made the situation easier! There will be 1 entrant per class and auditions have started this week. Miss Simpson is doing a fantastic job organising the event alongside Emily, our Children's Champion, who will be the host. Entries will be recorded and then the award ceremony will be live in school via Teams. I have heard that superheroes will be in school and our judges are all set for another fun filled, talented packed event!

Well-being support

The pandemic has brought the issue of Mental Health to the fore and it is great that it is becoming more widely spoken about, with stories in the news every day. There is no doubt that many children and adults across the country will have suffered with anxiety as a result of the pandemic and it is something which we have been keeping a close eye on since September. Miss Bewick, our PSA, has counselling qualifications and is available to speak to, in confidence, if either you or your child need support or advice in this area. She also has a background in working for Families First so has a good knowledge of available support services. I know that she has arranged some support for families already and is very keen to help others.

Miss Bewick would also like me to share her email address with you so that you can contact her directly: r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk. Please feel free to get in touch with her about this or any other matters which she would normally assist.

In addition, I have made arrangements with a company who will provide well-being services to staff from April 1st. They will also meet with our Children's Champion and Y5 and Y6 CLT members to discuss and develop a pupil well-being service late this month and present to our Governors in June.

Collection and Drop Off

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. **In addition, we would respectfully request that adults do not stand and gather together in groups outside of the school gates as this presents a clear COVID risk. 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 still very important at this point in time as the return of all pupils to school across the country will inevitably see a rise in the infection rate.

Lateral Flow Tests

The Government has announced that parents and carers can order lateral flow tests to use at home for Primary school age pupils. Please note that this is not compulsory and that Primary Schools are not involved in the distribution of these tests. However, it is important that we share with you all as it is another way to try and keep the children safe and reduce community transmission. Staff in school are already using these twice a week and will continue to do so. The tests are easy enough to do when you get used to them and offer some extra reassurance. These tests are the same ones which have been used in secondary schools. Please click on the link for further information:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Class Charts Points

This week Grace R finished as top points scorer in Reception, while Sebastian A scored highest in 1/2. In 3/4 Amelia W gathered the most points while Mateo A achieved the same feat in 5/6. Well done to all concerned!

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. In addition, if there is a positive Lateral Flow Test result, the procedure is to self-isolate and to book a COVID test in the same manner as previously. Full details are given in the link above. Thank you.

A Bowden

Miss A Bowden
Head of School

D Harrison

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Executive Headteacher