



ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY.

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OUR LADY OF LOURDES

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



St Patrick's
Catholic Voluntary Academy

Headteacher: Mrs T Lane

27th January 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuing support of school and the children. I know this is an exceptionally difficult time for all of you and for your children currently. You continue to juggle the demands of home life: cooking, cleaning, childcare, food shopping and for many of you working also from home or going out to work whilst worrying about the risk to health from Covid 19. The furlough scheme has been supportive but has also led to financial challenges for many families and we appreciate this puts additional strain on you as wages are cut but bills, rent & mortgages remain the same.

In school we also face many challenges to continue to educate all the children through remote learning at home and for the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils in school and we very much appreciate all that you are doing to support your children at home with this. We provided remote learning immediately from the start of lockdown in March 2020 through our learning platform Seesaw and paper copies on request where internet/device access was difficult. The vast majority of our children engaged as fully as possible with this, which was down to the hard work of parents and the commitment of teachers in providing a full curriculum. However, we appreciate that completing all the lessons as well as managing family life wasn't possible for everyone and we do understand this and are very grateful for what you were able to do at that time in supporting your child with home learning.

When the children returned to school in June 2020, we found that children who engaged with learning on Seesaw as fully as possible made progress and attained well but still have some gaps in their learning, as we all agree no matter how good remote learning is, it doesn't replace being in the classroom. Sadly, a small number of pupils engaged very little with remote learning and this was for a variety of family related reasons; these children now have significant gaps in their learning and will find it difficult to catch up. From June 2020's return to school, to the start of this current national lockdown the staff in school have worked extremely hard to back fill gaps in learning caused by the last national lockdown as well as teaching their current year group curriculum and we were seeing those gaps closing for children.

During this lockdown, we have continued to respond to parent feedback on remote learning and introduced live lessons across the day for each year group as well as a morning welcome. In this way, we are providing opportunities for the children to see their teacher and friends daily and be able to ask questions, this will support their wellbeing as well as learning, as I know they miss their friends and teachers. We have timetabled the live lessons so that if you have several children at home, they can all access a live lesson at some point in the morning or afternoon without it clashing with their brothers or sisters' live lesson. From your feedback after last lockdown, we have reduced the number to 3 or 4 Seesaw hour long lessons a day to make it more manageable for you. Each Seesaw lesson has a specific teaching video created by your child's class teacher to support you so that you have an understanding of what the children are learning and to take the stress of teaching away from you. In addition to this, there are a number of other activities like TT Rockstars, Numbots, spelling, active breaks, reading activities etc to break the lessons up and to support the wider curriculum. As a Catholic school, we know you'll agree that it is essential that our Catholic ethos continues to underpin all we do in supporting our children's

spiritual and religious development so there is a daily liturgy too. Acts of Worship are prepared in different ways as if we were in school, by me, by the children and by the teachers and teaching assistants. Miss Wall is continuing her Emotional Literacy Support work with specific children and teaching assistants are now delivering live social and reading interventions as additional support for children in each year group. If you haven't yet looked at what is available on Seesaw please do, the children can access the majority of it independently once logged on and should just need you to check it over at the end.

There is a lot on offer to support you with remote learning but please do not feel under pressure to complete everything we offer every day. We want to provide a curriculum that as much as possible, is as closely in line with the one children receive in school and want you to feel supported and not have to search for things to teach your child. However, the majority of staff in school are also parents and fully understand and appreciate how difficult juggling home life commitments, work and supporting their children's education is. Many of them finish school each day then go home to carry out remote education with their own children whilst balancing the commitments of family life, cooking, food shopping and house work as you do. We do understand how difficult this is and really appreciate what you are doing because you want the best for your children as we do. Teachers call you at home if children aren't accessing remote learning to offer you support and check you are all ok and well. At times, they may be calling to let you know that maybe your child is telling you they have done their work on Seesaw but possibly, they haven't. As a parent, even though they were conscientious I know that my girls didn't always do every piece of homework they were set when they were at school and I blissfully believed them when they told me they had! We know our children are finding this tough too and it's easy to lose motivation when not in school that's why we give daily feedback on their work and are always here to talk to them and encourage them to keep going.

Feel free to be flexible in accessing the remote learning to fit in with your family life, learning in the early evening or at weekends may work better for you rather than in the school day. You may not be able to access all the activities daily and again that is understandable so try to focus on maths, English then RE and Topic and leave the other things. Please know we are here to help, you can contact your child's class teacher in school every day and if they are teaching when you call please leave a message and they will call you back. Similarly feel free to ask questions about the task set in the live lesson.

Whilst national lockdown is not something, any of us wanted, we know it is what must happen to reduce the transmission of the virus and save lives; right now keeping your children at home is the safest thing to do for the nation in line with government guidelines. The staff work very hard to make remote learning at St Patrick's the best it can be for all our children to prevent further gaps in learning forming but it can only have the impact needed with your continuing support.

The message of this letter is to thank you all for the enormous efforts you are putting into remote learning, we know how challenging it is, we admire you greatly for the balancing act you are doing and will continue to support you in any way we can. Thank you for all the kind, appreciative and supportive messages you have emailed and have put on seesaw, I share them all with the staff here and they mean a great deal to them. They are working very hard for all our children who we love and care about very much; we want the best for them and for you as a family.

Please stay safe and continue to support the remote learning as much as possible and call us if you need help.

Kind regards,

Tracy Lane
Headteacher