



## Carlton Primary School News – 20<sup>th</sup> November

### Dear parents

We are looking forward to welcoming KS1 back on Monday. I bet children are keen to have more freedom from tomorrow, as today is the last day of isolation. We very much appreciate the support of all parents but particularly KS1 parents over the last 2 weeks. KS1 staff will be looking forward to escaping too!

### New author to hit the newsstands of Rothwell.

Congratulations to Ethan Ward who has won the Carlton entry into the Rothwell Record short story competition. His work will be printed in the December issue. Great news – remember you knew him before he was famous!

### School run

From Monday it will feel busier again. Over the last 2 weeks it has been very quiet without KS1, with lots of space and some more relaxed timings. Please stick to the time slots and space out so as not to arrive early or in the first few minutes. Also please remember face coverings to help protect our community.

### PTA fundraising

A really big thank you to the PTA for organising the Christmas cards fundraiser and the Laps for Lapland. Any late entries for the Christmas cards can come in on Monday after which the offer closes.

How are the laps going? It is great to have a fundraiser going ahead at a time when it is very difficult to hold events. We hope you enjoy clocking up the miles. **Join our PTA for a zoom meeting on Monday evening to get involved and support their work** – details have been e-mailed out.

### Keeping school well ventilated and children warm

We are following the advice to leave windows and doors open where possible. As the temperature drops there is a balance that is more difficult to achieve with classrooms certainly cooler than normal. The answer could be a school fleece to wear over the normal school jumpers when inside. Graham Briggs has a Maroon Carlton fleece with our logo for £14.00. We are keen to keep the rooms as ventilated as possible, especially over winter and a fleece would be comfortable to wear without restricting children. This is obviously just a suggestion to help as we have had a mild autumn so far and things are likely to change. If you do go for a fleece remember to name it. I am not on commission either – honest!

### Children in need

It was great that we supported this event on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Carlton raise £313, which has gone off to join the national total. Thanks to all who have supported and contributed.

### UK Cancer Research

Children in Year 5&6 have organised their own fundraiser today selling cakes made in school and bookmarks. This idea came from a group of children who felt strongly they wanted to do something to support this cause. I have been impressed with their determination and passion to help make a difference. The final total will be in the region of £100.

## **KS1 boxes.**

Children in Years 1&2 will need boxes for some homework over the coming week as a new topic will begin. Please keep some cardboard boxes ready to use at home. Thank you.

## **Closing bubbles**

What the KS1 bubble closure highlighted was how suddenly everything changes. At 8.23 we had a normal day under weigh but a minute later all changed with huge impact on parents and staff. This makes it clear all staff and families need to have thought through their options and contingencies to cope with very short notice school closure and the need for isolation. This included the reality that Google classrooms has been highlighted for the last 7 months as the way in which learning will be maintained and access to a device is really important for children.

**Below are some FAQ.** These could apply to any bubble in school. It is a bit lengthy but it is an attempt to answer the questions I know are out there and to reduce the need to answer individual e-mail.

## **Why close all 3 classes? This is either over cautious or you must have messed up with your cross infection control measures.**

This is about how we have defined our bubbles in school. This was explained in the summer term and in our recovery document. We have 4 bubbles of children and an office bubble: Early Years, Years 1&2, Years 3&4 and Years 5&6. Each bubble has 3 classes of up to 90 children. The same 4 bubbles are maintained in the Den which has been reorganised with additional staffing to reduce any cross infection. Each bubble is a school phase which works together to share staff, bring children together for group work and play together outside at breaks and lunch. Practically each bubble also shares corridors, access into/out of school, toilets, sinks and washing facilities, each staff bubble have their own staff room space, lunch is eaten in the bubble with additional supervision. Working like this keeps staff and children constant. If a member of staff is off, where possible, the bubble stretches staff to accommodate. No staff are shared across bubbles. For staff working in each bubble it is intense with additional lunch and break duties to supervise bubbles separately. It would not be practical or possible to separate out individual classes into totally separate bubbles. This is due to the physical constraints of the building, toilets etc and the need to share staff. It would also stop social contact between classes, sharing of resources, mixing for phonics or other catch up activities and therefore reduce learning and social opportunities. If our bubbles were set at individual class level the Den could not operate as we could not staff or separate out 10 areas of before and after school care.

## **Secondary schools are doing strict seating plans to prevent whole classes being sent home why don't you?**

Guidance is clear that it is impossible to track Early Years and KS1 pupils or expect them to sit in a strict seating plan. Therefore whole bubbles need to close. In KS2 we have been asked to consider if strict seating plans and separation of children could work in isolating particular children. We do now have class seating plans in KS2 and have considered if we could guarantee separation but we feel this is highly unlikely and unrealistic. For the reasons above – toilets, washing facilities, staffing and social mixing at break and lunch - whole KS2 bubbles will most likely close. We physically cannot separate children or restrict staff further and feel KS2 children are too young to be sat all day in single restrictive seating plans, including lunch and break times. Secondary's are dealing with very complex movements, having to accept greater mixing of children due to pupil numbers and subjects etc. The good news is primary is more static and stable from a cross infection point of view, bad news is when a bubble goes it is the whole bubble.

**I have not got access to a device for my child can you help?**

We have applied for devices from the Government and have received our DfE allocation of 2 chromebooks for the whole school. This is tough for many families, especially if multiple children are off at the same time. We have been clear since first lock down that google Classrooms will be the way learning continues for KS1&2. Tapestry will be used by Early Years to communicate home learning. This is an extraordinary situation where we would like to help but do not have the funding to do so. The vast majority of families now have access to GC/Tapestry.

**I don't like Google classrooms. I have not got a printer can you send out paper copies?**

We have tried to avoid the need to print at home where possible. We will review how well GC has gone over the last 2 weeks and appreciate there are a few individual families who have struggled to access. Our plan is not to offer mixed online and paper work at this point. Pre-arranged paper workbooks by their nature would have to be sat waiting and possibly never get used. They would also have to be off the peg generic and have no relation to the learning that was planned. The other issue is the distribution of books, this works when children are sent home from school but not when school is closed at other times. Delivery of work opens up issues of cross contamination for staff and families. Staff isolating are working from home and in school staff are flat out. That said we will look at whether we can recommend work books and work with individual families to develop solutions.

**Why not do Live Zoom lessons?**

A live lesson to 30 children or even a group of primary children would not end well and would not be achieved without a lot of parental support. All children would need access to a device at the same set time, irrespective of parental work or other caring responsibilities. This would add massively to parental pressure and inequality of access for children without clear benefits. Staff are isolating at home without a classroom and resources at their disposal.

**The work on Google classrooms was too easy. Could we have tougher cutting edge learning?**

There is a balance that needs to be struck and an acceptance that work at home cannot replicate school. Not all children have adult support and we are attempting to make work as independent as possible, therefore it cannot be cutting edge learning that needs explaining and modelling by adults. In the summer when we surveyed parents about Google classrooms there were parents in the middle but a huge proportion wanted more content and a similarly huge proportion wanted less as they were too busy. We have tried to strike a middle ground. I have received e-mails from parents today thanking staff for the regular reliable uploads every evening and swift responses to any question, for positive feedback and feeling connected. I have had others wanting Zoom lessons and greater challenge. We will review but need to maintain workable solutions.

I hope you have a good weekend – we are looking forward to next week in school and hope we get the right balance of excitement and normality!

Regards

Adam Pritchard-Jenkins

