



January 8th 2021

Let's make this work!

Firstly and most importantly, I hope that you and your families are well. We think about all of our Montalbo families and our wider community and are only at the end of the phone or email, should you need us.

Once again, we find ourselves in circumstances that none of us wish for. However, from our school's point of view, we are tackling the new situation with increased knowledge and skills, and are determined to make the best of this situation. We listened to feedback from parents from the first lockdown and worked together as a staff to try and come up with a teaching and learning plan that should work for the vast majority of people. Where this is not working for you, please contact the school.

The speed and efficiency in which the staff have reacted to the Prime Minister's Announcement has been remarkable. I have said many times that I am fortunate to lead such a talented and enthusiastic team, and this has been demonstrated again with very little notice. From a teacher's point of view, it is natural to be a little apprehensive, not only when you have a wider and often parental audience alongside the child in your class. Staff also have to cope with the temperamental nature of technology, which can add to their stress levels! Furthermore, teaching primary school children who are in class and online is very different to their normal practice. Overall, I could not be prouder and hope that children at home (and parents/carers) are feeling very much 'connected' to their teaching staff and class. We are very grateful to our parents for supporting their children with the work and ensuring that photographs of work are submitted each lesson. Well done to you all!

The following is worth mentioning regarding the use of TEAMS. Please make sure children are appropriately dressed (ie not in nightwear) as at some points they may want to use their cameras to 'connect' further with staff or classmates. Please also remind children to use the chat facility sensibly and keep comments to do with work. Remember that if you are unable to access the lessons live, there is a chance to watch them later and complete the assignments or activities at a more convenient time.

Moving forward, Mrs Bartoli and I should be able to take some assemblies each week for children in Reception to Year 6. Mrs Bartoli is planning to share ideas around positive mental health and I will be taking a Celebration Assembly. Children at home and in school can all win awards and it will be structured pretty similarly to our usual assemblies, but at present they will be recorded rather than live. One of our popular awards is 'You've Been Spotted' where staff highlight children who have demonstrated good manners, kindness and other qualities. If your child has been helpful at home or done something that you are proud of, please let us know via the class emails. We usually choose one or two 'You've been Spotted' per class so if everyone was to send us something in please bear this in mind, we will respond via email but may not have time to mention it in the 30mins assembly! Please also let us know if your child has a birthday in the week of the assembly and we mention them too. Thank you.

Below I have summarised some of the key messages from the past week:-

Timings

We did think about changing the school day back to pre Covid timings but due to the numbers of children attending, timings will remain the same as the Autumn term to ensure that adults and children can socially distance more easily.

Wraparound care

Please use this only when absolutely necessary to allow staff the opportunity to plan effectively for online learning and for those children in class, as well as responding to your emails.

Children of critical workers

These children do not have to attend full time should parents work shifts or be on a part-time basis. Your children can access school on the days/times needed as long as we are made aware of this by email. If one parent is at home, please consider keeping your child at home.

Children entitled to Free School Meals

Children of critical workers or vulnerable children that are entitled to Free School Meals and are in school will receive a meal from school if requested. This means that they would not qualify for a hamper as well. If your child is not in school, Taylor Shaw can provide a daily packed lunch or a weekly hamper on request.

Hampers will be ready for collection on Monday 11th January from 11am for parents who requested them this week. If you would like a hamper on Friday 15th January, please contact the school by 5pm on Monday 11th January. Thank you.

COVID 19 reminders

During this period, please do not send your child to school if they are unwell in any way. Please continue to be especially vigilant around the symptoms of Covid-19. The medical advice is clear: you must self-isolate if you have coronavirus symptoms or live in the same household as somebody who does. The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you or your household have any of the symptoms self-isolate and book a test. <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> has information about how to get a test.

Dates for the diary

January 5th – February 12th School closed to all but children of critical workers and vulnerable children

February 15th -February 19th Half term

Mr C Minikin,
Head Teacher