

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

To our Dear Westwood Family,

We hope you are well and have been able to stay safe and positive during this difficult time.

As you may know from social media or the news today, the First Minister has confirmed today that he will bring the decision-making on schools and colleges into line with the Welsh Government's three-week review timetable of 29<sup>th</sup> January.

**What this means for schools is that learners will continue to learn remotely, and children of critical key workers and vulnerable children can have access to on-site provision until Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January.** Our school pupils will **not** be returning on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January as previously conveyed. Unless the rates of community transmission in Wales reduce significantly by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January to allow a return, most students in schools and colleges will continue working remotely until the February half term.

These decisions have been made in line with the TAG report found here:

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-variant-concern-and-education-wales>

We as a school, and Flintshire County Council, were disappointed that this news first came to light at midnight via media channels. We always wish to communicate any changes or events directly to yourselves officially, so you hear it first-hand from us. The First Minister has made this official announcement at lunchtime today.

**THE MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST MINISTER IS WE ARE IN LOCKDOWN - THE SAFEST PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD IS AT HOME.**

<https://gov.wales/first-minister-stay-home-save-lives>

To summarise going forward:

- **Children of critical keyworkers and identified vulnerable learners will be allowed on the school site only if they cannot be safely cared for at home and as emergency provision only for when you need to work - we need to keep everybody safe, our numbers as low as possible to reduce transmission and not increase the risk in our school community. This will be reviewed on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January.**
- **Online learning will continue.** Mrs Brown and Mrs Donaghy are working with their teams to ensure you have learning provision and support.
- Our class teachers will be holding **Zoom sessions weekly** for the children to connect with their peers and their teachers. Seesaw is available to the children to further support them with their learning.
- There will be **weekly check-ins with Parents** via emails from the class teachers.
- Teachers will be regularly updating you with information and providing blended online opportunities via email.
- If you are in receipt of **free school meals, direct payments will continue** whilst school isn't fully operational.
- If you require a device or support with online learning, please contact the office.

Obviously, we are sad that the extension to online blended learning means we won't see all our children face to face for a bit longer at Westwood. The wellbeing and positive mental health of our children, parents and staff is paramount to us at Westwood. We will be supportive of our families and always wish to be able to help you. We are hopeful that the option to Zoom with the class teachers and their classmates will be accessed and give the children and staff the boost they need!

Please do not struggle whilst your child is at home learning. We are grateful of your support and what is being asked of you. Please get in touch if you need anything at all. Contact the office between 9am to 3pm, via telephone or email.

I will keep you constantly updated with any news and changes. Keep checking your emails!

Thank you for your support. Please stay safe and be positive!

Best wishes,

Mrs Williams and Team Westwood