

St Andrew's Major Church in Wales Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Friday 8th January 2021

As we now come to the end of the first week I wanted to update you. Obviously we have now heard the latest announcement from Welsh Government that the majority of children will not return to school until at least the end of the month and possibly until after half term. This is obviously disappointing but not unexpected given the current situation. I apologise that everything seems rushed and adhoc at times but as I am sure you will understand, we are continually receiving updated guidance and advice from Welsh Government and the Local Authority, and as such are continually trying to keep up. Please don't assume we get all information before it is in the media – this is very often not the case. I always try to communicate information to you as soon as I am able and I will continue to do so.

School based provision

As you know, the form came out to be completed for next week's provision and I have received an increased number of requests. Due to potential staffing issues, please ensure this form is completed by the deadline in order for us to plan. Otherwise you may not get a place for your child/ren. Also can I remind you that we have limited capacity and whilst I hope to fulfil all valid requests, I cannot guarantee this and places will be offered according to the priority list on the guidance from Welsh Government. Depending how long the current situation continues, the form will need to be in by Thurs 5pm for the following week. I would like to say a huge thank you to our support staff who will be working with these children in school whilst the teachers are online with See-saw. A new form will be sent out early next week for w/c 18th. A slight change will be the need to complete a form for each child please.

Devices and Internet

We sent out an email earlier in the week around issues families may be having around having enough/suitable devices and any issues with internet. If you are having any issues, please do let us know as we or the LA may be able to help. We are loaning out devices to those who need them. Please do email the school office ASAP and we will investigate. As I said in an email sent on Wednesday, if you have any issues with your child logging on to See-saw etc. please contact your child's teacher directly as the school office are not always to help with this. The staff email addresses were also shared in that email.

Remote Learning

I have been really pleased to hear from the teachers about how many children have been accessing their learning using Seesaw and how hard the children are working. In the older classes we are approaching 100% engagement which is very impressive. As we are now expecting this method of learning to be in place for some time, we really do want to see all children learning through see-saw and having contact with their teachers. Please do let us know if there is anything we can do to enable this. Please note, the teachers are available on see-saw during school hours and are therefore able to help children and provide feedback during this time. This is obviously very worthwhile but also time consuming with up to 30 pupils. Teachers do also need time to plan and prepare resources which they are doing once they log off see-saw

at 3.30. We do understand that for some families struggling to also manage work responsibilities, the children's school work may be done in the evening or at weekends (including my own children). However, teachers will not acknowledge or respond to this work until the following school day.

A few parents have requested live sessions for the children. I hope you will agree that we have made huge improvements in the provision since the lockdown last year and our move from Hwb which many parents (and staff) found difficult to use. The teachers are on seesaw throughout the day and are having lots of contact with pupils. This has taken a huge amount of planning and training and we are pleased thus far. This is not to say we are not still looking for ways of improving what we can offer and one thing we are considering is holding a class or group check-in with the teacher. We may trial this with the older children first and review with an aim to roll it out further down the school. However, at present I am keen to imbed what we are doing with See-saw and get all pupils on a level playing field. Contrary to the negativity in social media around 'lazy teachers', our staff are working extremely hard and indeed teachers regularly tell me how much more difficult and time consuming this way of working is.

As I have said, our support staff will be supporting children who are in school. They will also be helping to create teaching videos and other activities for see-saw. Some will also take on a pastoral role and will be making well-being contact for those pupils who need them.

Thank you to all staff for their hard work and commitment to doing the best they can for the pupils. I would also like to thank all of you parents and carers who are juggling your own jobs and pressures whilst supporting the children. As I have said in the past, do not be too harsh on yourselves if you have a day where it just doesn't go to plan. When I am in school and my husband is in London, my 16 year old son is supposedly helping home school my 10 year old. You can probably guess how successful home learning is in our house!

We are here to help!

School is open and we are always here to support you and your families in any way we can so please do get in touch. Please can I make a special mention to all our key workers who continue to put themselves on the front line for the benefit of us all. My prayers are with everyone at this increasingly difficult and worrying time. Stay safe everyone,

Yours faithfully,



Headteacher