



29th January 2021

Dear parents and carers,

As January draws to a close, I wanted to write to share my thoughts on the weeks to come and to offer my thanks for your help and support in what has been a challenging month, but still one in which there has been much to celebrate at St Gabriel's.

Continued partial closure

On Wednesday, the Government announced that the operation of schools will continue in its current state for at least the **first two weeks of next half-term with the potential for wider opening from 8th March**. We therefore have two weeks this side of half term and at least two weeks after, to continue in our twin aims; to remotely educate all of our pupils and to provide places in school for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Whilst an extended period of partial closure is not the news we were hoping for, it is welcome to have a little clarity in advance so we can prepare effectively for the task ahead. We would expect to hear directly after half-term when a wider opening will be possible.

Remote learning

We're now looking ahead to our next four weeks of remote learning with continued determination to make it as good as can be. Thank you to everyone who gave feedback on our approach. 65% of respondents said that the quantity and expectation of work was about right with a further quarter saying there was a bit too much to do. For those families, we would reiterate that there is no pressure to complete everything on offer but please let's do all we can to prioritise English and Maths each day. Each week we are seeing over **4,000 engagements** with remote lessons and pieces of work being posted. The quantity and quality of work is fantastic, and we are able to maintain good connection with every pupil through their journals allowing two-way feedback. It has been wonderful to boost a feeling of connection with live face-to-face class assemblies over the past couple of weeks;

these have been really valued by the children, and we'd really encourage everyone to attend when invited throughout the week.

We really appreciate that everyone has got a lot to balance at the moment, we've all got unique circumstances and it's a tough time for our community but **we know everyone is doing their best, so thank you! You are doing an incredible job.**

Half term holiday

It has been confirmed that half term itself will be taken as a holiday, as it would in usual circumstances. We will not be providing remote lessons or providing school places for any children that week, allowing staff and pupils the opportunity of a well-deserved break. Families in need of childcare should make arrangements with their usual providers if they so require. We are going to keep **Monday 22nd February as a planned INSET day** with remote learning beginning again on **Tuesday 23rd February**. We will also welcome back those pupils who require a key worker place on that date.

Key worker places

We are pleased to have been able to offer places to the children of Key Workers, supporting those families whose work is critical to the COVID response. We are able to support a minority of pupils in school in an environment that is safe and workable for children and staff whilst also maintaining effective home learning. Whilst we want to help as many families as we can, we are asking you to work with us by only requesting additional places for children if absolutely necessary. We are close to our capacity and we don't want provision for either group to be impacted over the next few weeks. We understand that working situations are changing all the time for our families and there is a lot to juggle, but you are supporting us so well by keeping numbers manageable in the current circumstances.

Family support

Parenting during lockdown is no easy task. [The family information service](#) is a great resource for help and guidance on a range of issues: family relationships; finance; housing; parenting support; special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); childcare; health and wellbeing. Call 01926 742274 or visit their [website](#) for a host of useful resources and guides. The Family Support line [01926 412412](#) is a free service which puts callers through to an experienced family support worker who can help

with information, advice and guidance on a range of parenting support issues, including: sleeping, toileting, eating, behaviour management, routines and boundaries, relationships, conflict, self-care and more. The service is for everyone and anyone who needs it.

All that is left to say from me is thank you and well done for the fantastic way you are managing this challenge. Keep going, we will get through, coming back stronger for the experience. Do not hesitate to get in touch for any reason, either through the office or directly on your child's journal.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness – Lamentations 3:22-23

Yours sincerely,



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Headteacher



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