



Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Primary School

Station Road, Penshaw, Houghton-Le-Spring, DH4 7JZ

Telephone: 0191 3854545

Email: admin@olqoprprimary.org.uk

Website: www.olqoprprimary.org.uk

Acting Headteacher: Mrs E. Maher

12th January 2021

Good evening,

We hope you are all safe and well. These are very challenging times for us all and it is even more important during this National Lockdown to work together and keep our community safe. School is closed to help reduce the transmission of COVID 19, particularly this new variant, which has seen a massive increase in cases for all age ranges across the country.

National Lockdown and School – As a school we will strongly continue to stress the government’s “Stay at Home” message. May we remind you that our places for critical workers (as defined on GOV.UK updated 31/12/2020) should only be requested if there is **nobody** at home, or in the family support or childcare support bubble, to look after your child(ren). Also the request should only be made if as a critical worker, you have to attend your workplace that day. If you can work whilst remaining in the house on a particular ‘school’ day, then your child **must** stay at home with you. Please note we are NOT childcare provision. “Stay at home and save lives,” this is safest option for everyone at the moment.

Therefore could we please ask our critical worker families who have asked for a place in school to follow the guidance and if you can keep your child(ren) at home, please email or telephone school to relinquish your child’s place. Recently the guidelines were updated around nursery provision, please could we reinforce the same “Stay at home” message. If you are at home, then that is the safest place for you and your child to be. Again, please email or telephone school to relinquish your child’s place.

The number of critical worker children at school during the original lockdown meant we had a maximum of 23 children in school at any one time. This lockdown is very different in many ways as amongst other factors, the criteria for school places has widened and as a result, we currently have 115 children which equates to one third of our children in school. Some bubbles are now at capacity, and people are still requesting spaces. Please know that we want all of our children to be in school, but safety must remain our priority. If we increase numbers in school, we decrease the safety of our school community.

We share and empathise with everyone the concerns surrounding the mental health and wellbeing of their child(ren) during a National Lockdown – but the lockdown has closed schools. Staff are working hard to provide families with remote learning opportunities to support the children during this National Lockdown. School staff have had to operate under the most unrealistic timescales demanded by the government but they continue to strive to meet these challenges, minimising the disruption the short notice of this lockdown has caused. The message is clear from us as a school community- we will do all we can (as always) to support our families but this cannot be at the expense of the health and wellbeing of all who work in school. We are mindful of striking a healthy balance.

We know how difficult it can be to support children with their home learning, especially whilst working from home. While it is incredibly important for them to keep up with their school work, please be kind to yourselves too. If you have a bad day and don’t get through all of the work, please don’t worry, and know we will do all we can to help.

Class Dojo Remote Learning Platform – All Year groups have Class Dojo set up for your children to access the remote learning posted by their class teacher on a daily basis. The learning in school mirrors the planned activities for working at home. It is impossible to replicate the school day and we are not currently providing live lessons, as the teachers are in school every day working with children and are also keeping up to date with their own Class Dojo commitments during the school day and beyond! We do appreciate your feedback and suggestions regarding our remote learning and we are currently looking at ways to further develop our learning platform. Please be assured the remote learning we currently offer complies with government guidelines and is documented in our remote learning policy.





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As leaders of the school we are so proud of the commitment and dedication of all our fantastic staff at Our Lady Queen of Peace, who are working tirelessly to ensure we provide the best learning opportunities for all, despite current 'National Lockdown' restrictions.

Free School Meals – the government has promised a national voucher scheme for those families in receipt of means-tested free school meals. We are currently providing food parcels until this voucher system is launched.

Laptops for schools – you will be aware of the publicity surrounding the access to ICT equipment for families across the country. If you as a family struggle to access remote learning due to the lack of broadband/internet connectivity and/or the lack of readily accessible equipment (laptop) – please email school with the subject: ICT Access to admin@olqoprprimary.org.uk providing details of your current means of access. We cannot make any promises but it will assist us when making a bid for Our Lady Queen of Peace to the Department for Education (DfE).

Stay safe.

Stay at Home.

Take care and God bless,

Elizabeth Maher

Acting Head Teacher

