



# Frome Valley First School

## Keep in Touch Newsletter



### Lockdown Update

Dear All,

We hope that this newsletter finds you safe and well.

There have been so many changes, once again, since 4<sup>th</sup> January. However, we now seem to have a new routine that is working well at school.

We have many more children in school for this lockdown. This is a national picture and partly due to the DfE widening the criteria for critical workers. There are about 26 children in the school each day. They are split into two bubbles (Years 3&4 together and Years R-2 together) so that we can limit the number of children together each day. They are based in the hall which is a light and airy room. The children in school join the other children for their online lessons in the classroom so that all are learning at the same time.

We do not know what is happening after half term but the DfE has promised that it will let schools know before half term. Our advice from the Local Authority is that half term will happen as normal with the school closed to everyone so we are following this advice unless we hear anything different. We will, of course, keep you informed.

### Remote Learning

Remote learning seems to, on the whole, be working well. Do continue to let the class teacher know if you have any issues. The 'live' online lessons are helping the teachers to continue to teach the pupils (even in a very different way!) and we know that the children enjoy seeing their peers each day, even if only remotely. We can't thank Frome Valley parents enough for all your efforts to get your child online each day. We have about **95% of pupils** joining in with the online lessons. This is down to each and every one of you persevering with the technology and juggling your home life to allow your child to learn online. **You truly are superheroes!**

We are hoping that the online learning will mean that children won't have slipped so far behind in their learning during lockdown 3.0.

A few things to remember during online lessons (including safeguarding reminders):

- Please make sure that your child is ready to start the lesson at the allotted time and only join the lesson a few minutes before it begins.
- Children must be dressed and there needs to be an adult present (for safeguarding reasons).
- Please make sure that your child is not eating during sessions as we are often asking children to contribute to the lesson.

## **Google Meet**

It has been a journey for all of us to log on to Google Meet for the online lessons. We will continue to help in any way that we can.

The issues with Google Classrooms seem to link to whether you have an android or apple device and whether you are using a tablet, a desktop computer or a mobile phone. So, unfortunately, we don't have one answer that fits all!

Here are a few recurring issues:

### **Needing to be admitted into a Google Meet lesson**

For every child that has a Frome Valley email account (e.g. [joebloggs@fromevalley.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:joebloggs@fromevalley.dorset.sch.uk)), once you are signed in as that child, then they can join the lesson without needing to be admitted into the online lesson (and Google Meet). We only have to admit people that do not have a Frome Valley email account (e.g. [joebloggs@yahoo.com](mailto:joebloggs@yahoo.com)). This message usually means that, for some reason, you are trying to access the Google Meet still logged into your account. Try logging out of everyone's account (this seems to be the issue for many problems!) and starting again. We have also noticed, for Apple devices, that you need to download the Google Meet app **and** log your child into the Google Meet app. For safeguarding reasons, we need to only be admitting children with their Frome Valley accounts so, if you are getting this message, do keep trying to sort this out. Of course, if you are really stuck on that day, we will admit you. We don't want your child to miss out on a lesson.

### **Using the 'Pin to Screen' Function**

When taking part in a 'google meet' online lesson, some parents are finding that the screen is switching between the teacher and other people who talk with their microphones on. To stop this from happening, hover your mouse over the teacher's face and you will get three icons appear. Click on the 'pin' icon and this will make sure only the teacher's panel will present on the screen and will not change if others are speaking.



## **Staff Testing**

As you may have heard in the news, staff in primary schools will soon be tested using lateral flow tests. Staff will test themselves at home twice a week. This will, hopefully, support the national effort to stem the spreading of the virus and to pick up anyone who is asymptomatic. We are, at all times, following DfE guidance in this matter.

### **Home Learning Packs**

We will continue to send home the learning packs every two weeks. The system of parents picking up the packs seems to be working well so we will continue with this routine. We will also continue to offer three times that you can pick up your child's new pack.

**Next pick up day: Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January**

**Pick up times: 8.30-8.50am; 12-12.20pm and 2.40-3.15pm**

**Location: by the Year 3&4 doors**

### **Staff Training**

There are some courses that staff were already booked on before this lockdown was announced. Some of these courses have been cancelled but many have continued (as they are remote courses). We apologise if there are, therefore, a few occasions when the class teacher cannot deliver any online lessons on that day. We will, of course, communicate this to you and ensure there is still learning for your child to undertake on that day.

### **Reading at Home**

We can't currently change reading books at home. However, we have attached to this newsletter a list of online websites that help children to keep reading, in case this is of use.

The Oak **Academy** has also announced how it will support reading at home:

### **Introducing the Virtual School Library!**

Oak National Academy and the National Literacy Trust have come together to launch our Virtual School Library to keep children reading during lockdown.

Every week, a popular children's author will become our 'Author of the Week' and provide a free book or audiobook and exclusive videos and activities aimed at primary school children, all available at [library.thenational.academy](https://library.thenational.academy).

Our first Author of the Week is Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, who talks about how her infamous character Tracy Beaker got her name, offers exclusive activities and recommends her top reads to check out. *The Story of Tracy Beaker* is also available to read for free for a week. Spread the word!

### **Term Dates 2021-2022**

Term dates and INSET days for the next academic year have now been agreed. They are available for parents to view on the school website under the heading Key Information, Term Dates 2021 – 2022.