

Eastcombe Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mrs C Jones
Secretary: Mrs N Miles & Mrs B Ulett

Monday, 07 September 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the September term and the start of a new academic year. The children have settled well and it is wonderful to hear chatter and laughter in the school again. All of the children have embraced the new way of doing things, and are a credit to themselves. We are delighted to welcome many new children into the school and hope their Eastcombe Primary School journey is a happy one.

Here are just a few reminders about the logistics of the school day;

- 1) Please ensure you arrive at school promptly at the start and end of the day.
- 2) We have an agreement with the neighbours that we do not park in the lane at the side of the school. Please respect this and park elsewhere. Walking to school is encouraged where possible.
- 3) Please consider that children and families are on the roads and pavements around school, rather than in the playground. In order to keep everyone safe please drive carefully and park responsibly.

Our logistical procedures will be reviewed constantly. Bear with us whilst we are establishing what works well and what might need tweaking.

The main purpose of this letter is to inform you about our remote learning package and catch-up curriculum. These are important new additions to our established curriculum offer at Eastcombe Primary School. Guidance and updates are constantly being published and so our new curriculum will develop and evolve over the school year.

Blended Curriculum

We are now offering a blended curriculum. This is where our children can learn through face to face teaching in the classroom, or via an online digital platform. This remote learning package will be high quality, safe and align as closely as possible to our in-school provision. The remote learning will be integrated into existing school curriculum planning and will be required when a class, group or individuals need to self-isolate, if there is a COVID-19 related absence, or if there is a local lockdown requiring pupils to stay at home.

Principles of remote learning:

- A consistent whole school approach to online digital platforms
- Access to high quality remote education resources
- A well planned curriculum sequence that is linked to the school's curriculum where knowledge and skills are built
- Children will be set meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- Clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or high quality teaching videos and/or resources
- An offer that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school.
- Online tools should be used to allow pupil interaction, assessment and feedback.

At Eastcombe Primary School we have decided to use ClassDojo as our online digital platform. Each teacher will use this to set remote learning when it is required. Some of you will be familiar with this platform as Mr King has used it over the last few years. Moving forward we plan to use it for setting homework, sharing topic letters etc. It is expected that each child will be set up on ClassDojo and use this as required. There are terms and conditions that need to be agreed when you sign in for the first time. Class teachers will write to you about how to set ClassDojo up either as a mobile APP or web based platform or send an email with an invite to join ClassDojo, please sign up as soon as possible. Reception children will not be required to use this system, they have their own learning platform which is compatible with the Early Years Foundation Stage and Mrs Scott and Mrs Leese will write to Reception parents separately.

Catch up Curriculum or Recovery Curriculum

The Government has announced that each school will receive funding for a 'catch-up curriculum or recovery curriculum'. This funding will be released to schools in three tranches and is to be used for enabling pupils to 'catch up' on lost teaching time during lockdown. Schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances. Guidance has been issued on how best to spend this money and schools are accountable for how it is being used.

Principles of catch up plans:

- Pupils need to be emotionally settled before catch up plans are started
- Catch up should be intense, time limited, focused on key knowledge
- Specific groups of pupils should be targeted
- Catch up can be in class time or as an intervention delivered by teachers or teaching assistants
- Teachers need to check pupils for gaps in knowledge and plan accordingly

Staff at Eastcombe Primary School have already started thinking about how our children will 'catch-up'. Initial plans include;

1. Intervention groups for Phonics, Maths, Spelling, GPS (Grammar Punctuation & Spelling) and reading
2. Individual catch up sessions for pupils to include reading, phonics, handwriting and number work
3. Children who are currently on My Plans will automatically be included in the catch-up interventions
4. Children who will be included in catch-up plans will be identified by class teachers

It is my intention that our funding will be spent on additional Teaching Assistant hours to enable individual and group work to be implemented by either the class teachers or the teaching assistants themselves.

Communication

During lockdown we worked hard at keeping lines of communication open and welcomed your emails and regular contact. This was both essential and important. Moving forwards parental engagement will have to look a little different due to current circumstances.

- If you have an administrative enquiry or you need to get hold of a teacher please email the school office on admin@eastcombe.gloucs.sch.uk or call 01452 770227 as this is monitored throughout the day.
- Top tip! If you wish to write an email late in the evening, or at the weekend there is the facility to 'delay send' and set a time for the email to leave your outbox e.g. 8am This helps staff enormously.

- Sadly staff are not as available for a quick chat in the playground under current risk assessments and guidance as we once were. In light of this and in the spirit of welcoming communication with parents we are able to facilitate phone calls with parents if required. I am also available for zoom calls and virtual meetings.

Two way communication and parental engagement is really important to us. Our open, friendly, welcoming nature is something we are proud of and is the very essence of a small, rural village school. We don't want to lose that special something and are trying to keep it alive whilst juggling current restrictions and additional work pressures. We hope you understand.

I appreciate this has been a long letter, with lots of information. If you have any questions about our blended curriculum or catch-up curriculum then please ask. Details about these additional curriculum offers will be available on our school website.

Thank you for your support in returning children to school this September. We look forward to the many positives this new academic year will bring.

Yours in partnership,



Mrs Claire Jones
Head Teacher
Eastcombe Primary School