

Seghill First School Newsletter February 2021 edition 1

Covid-19 update

Staff have started to do their twice weekly **lateral flow Covid tests** at home. So far tests have been done twice and **all results have been negative**. It's not a particularly nice experience but it is what we all have to do to ensure all of staff are well and able to do their job.

We have had **no positive test results for children** in school and we have not had to close any groups due to a positive test result for our staff and children or via close contacts.

The testing process may well provide us with some asymptomatic positive test results. If this is the case, it will impact on what we can offer in terms of face to face teaching in school.

Given the prevalence of the virus in England, it is highly likely that we will have to **send home a whole class group**, rather than small groups of children, in the event of a **positive test result**.

It is therefore worth having a **Plan B** for child care available to you, just in case we need to send your child home to isolate for a number of days or if we have to close your child's group. Hopefully this won't happen but it's always good to have a backup plan, particularly as any changes we are required to make are likely to be at short notice.

Work has been completed

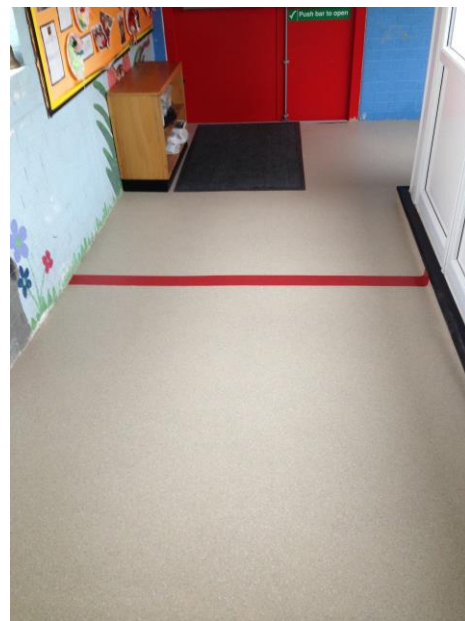
All of the work has now been completed following a leak in one of the water pipes under the corridor. The corridor looks as good as new and we can safely access the bottom yard and move around school again.



While the work was being done.



Just waiting for the new flooring.



All done and as good as new.

Birthdays

Our birthday boys and girls in the first two weeks of February are-

- Brodie age 4 in Orange class;
- Mason age 5 in Yellow class;
- Harrison age 7 in Green class.

Happy birthday to you all. We hope your birthday is special and fun.

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

Star of the week

Our stars of the week for the last two weeks are-

- **Mrs Bell's star** Holly, Lily, Dylan, Aurora;
- **Mrs Lyons' and Mrs Watson's star** Johnny, Mason, Jasmina, Callum I;
- **Mrs Knowles' star** Jake, William, Jack, Bobby;
- **Mrs Kembrey's star** Owen, Bailey J, Mason, Alannah;
- **Mrs Askew's star** Leeroy, Luciana, Harry, Emily S;
- **Miss Ornsby's star** Kieran I and Jayden;
- **Miss Chappell's star** Emily Hall, Joey and Jay.

Well done, stars. Stars are being chosen from children who are working at home and children who are working at school. Who will it be next week?



Huggg vouchers for children entitled to Free School meals

We are continuing to provide Huggg **supermarket vouchers** to parents of children who are eligible for **Free School Meals**. This is completely different to Universal Infant Free School Meals. Vouchers are sent out weekly via text.

Please note Huggg vouchers will be provided over the **February half term holiday week**.

Community Food Pantry at Seghill Community Centre

The **Community Food Pantry** has set up a drop in centre in conjunction with **Fareshare** where families can call in and get a bag of fresh produce to top up their supplies. This takes place every **Wednesday between 11:30am and 12:30pm at Seghill Community Centre**. It is open to all families, not just those eligible for Free School Meals.

Availability of places in school

We currently have approximately one third of our pupils in school, with the rest of the children being offered remote learning.

The longevity of our offer in school is highly dependent on staff well-being and safety – we simply can't run the school without staff staying fit and well. We are therefore prioritising staff safety and strictly limiting class numbers. **Both groups in school are currently full.**

Let us know what you have been doing at home

Class teachers have passed on some fabulous pictures and clips of what you have been doing at home. Please **send in a picture** to let us know what you have been doing. This includes school work and anything else you have been getting up to.

Please send pictures to the **admin email address** and I will post as many as I can on the **school Facebook page**. I will assume that if you send the picture to school you are giving consent for it to be posted on our Facebook page. If this is not the case, please state this clearly in your email.

admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk

Community kindness

In the previous newsletter we told you that we had received a number of **donations** from within our **school and community to support remote learning**.

Donations from within our school and our community during this lockdown to support remote learning have been amazing. We have received **£7250**. This includes donations from Seaton Valley Community Council, Mrs Knowles and her family in memory of her Dad, and from three other people in our local community who wish to remain anonymous, (although we know who they are).

To say "thank you" just doesn't seem to be enough to express how truly grateful we are to receive such generosity and thoughtfulness. So from all of us to Seaton Valley Community Council, Mrs Knowles and her family, and our three anonymous benefactors, thank you so much. Your donations are making a huge difference to children who would not otherwise be accessing remote learning and who would be falling behind without your help.

Extra laptops

In addition to the 10 laptops we have been allocated by the DfE, we have bought **10 more laptops**. With more than 40% of our children eligible for Free School Meals (45 children) we wanted to extend the number of families that we could support to **access remote learning**.

Some of the laptops have been collected by parents and it is fantastic to see how the impact the laptops have had on the children's **engagement with remote learning**. Well done to those children who are working on their laptops and managing so much better than before.

However I must say that I am absolutely astounded by the number of families who have been offered a laptop and who have not come to collect it or turned down the offer of a laptop. There are still reports in the media every day about children not being able to access remote learning because they don't have a device, yet we still have laptops that we received and bought in good faith that appear to be unwanted.

If your child is not in school at the moment and you would like a **brand new laptop from school on loan**, please contact me on the **admin email address** so we can **support you to support your child's learning at home**.

Remote learning

Remote learning is being provided via Tapestry for children in Orange and Yellow class and via Google Classroom for children in Red, Green and Blue class. Thank you to the teachers who have done a remarkable job in adapting their plans from whole class face to face teaching to remote learning so quickly.

As schools will be closed until at least Monday 08 March for many pupils, it is really important that children engage with the remote learning provided by their teachers.

Thank you to everyone who has already logged on and started to complete the tasks they have been given. Class teachers can be contacted directly with queries regarding remote learning using their email addresses-

anna.bell1@school360.co.uk

amanda.lyons@school360.co.uk

sarah.watson1@school360.co.uk

pamela.knowles@school360.co.uk

sarah.kembrey@school360.co.uk

hannah.askew@school360.co.uk

Engagement with remote learning

Class teachers are **tracking engagement with remote learning**. We can see who has logged into Google Classroom or Tapestry and who hasn't. We can see when you logged in most recently, what you have accessed and what you have posted.

These are our current figures-

Class	Percentage out of the whole class engaging with online learning (excluding those at school)
Blue – 30 children Yr 3/4	91%
Green – 27 children Yr 2/3	58%
Red – 28 children Yr 1/2	63%
Yellow – 24 children Reception	64%
Orange – 14 children Nursery	57%

If you are struggling, please **contact your child's teacher**. Issues with passwords can be dealt with very quickly and should not be a barrier to your child accessing remote learning.

We have been asked for paper packs. Paper packs are not a long term solution to accessing remote learning electronically. Children need to engage with remote learning to see the work and explanations that their teacher has included before they can do the work themselves.

Virtual meetings for children with class teachers

We are all trying to get used to working even more in the virtual world. Teachers are setting up and have carried out **virtual meetings** with the children in their class, which is a great way to get all of the children together whether they are at school or home.

Please look out for emails and messages on the Google Classroom which will contain **joining instructions**.

We hope that this will become a regular thing for the children and provide them with a chance to see their friends, even if it is only in the virtual world.

Guidance for joining a virtual meeting or a live lesson

We have put together some guidance for parents and children on how to have a successful, safe and worthwhile virtual meeting-

- Make sure your device is in a communal area like the living room (you should not join the meeting from your bedroom);
- Make sure you are dressed appropriately (no pjs or onesies!);
- Login 5 minutes before the meeting;
- Once you have joined and said hello, turn off your microphone so that you can listen to the instructions;
- Use the 'hand raised' icon if you would like to ask a question;
- Use the chat function to ask quick questions or to give and answer to the question;
- Have a pencil and paper ready so that you can join in with any tasks or games.

I dropped in on Mrs Kembrey hosting a Zoom meeting with some children from Yellow class last week and it was lovely to see everyone. I've also heard very positive feedback from other teachers about virtual meetings and live lessons.

Please look out for emails and messages on the Google Classroom which will contain **joining instructions**.

Half term holidays

School closes at 12 noon on Friday 12 February and reopens on Monday 22 February. School is not open to any pupils, including children of critical workers and those identified as vulnerable, during half term.

Plans to reopen school to all pupils

Following on from the Prime Minister's most recent announcement about schools, we remain closed to all pupils except specific groups identified by the government until at least week beginning Monday 08 March.

We have been told that schools will be given two weeks' notice of them reopening. However, this may not mean that school will reopen to all pupils in all year groups. I suspect that there will be a phased approach to reopening like there was in June last year. At that time, the youngest children were prioritised for returning to school. We have absolutely no advance notice of decisions that are made by the government and have not been given any information on phased reopening.

All I can say is that as soon as we know anything new, we will let you know straight away. Please keep an eye on our school **Facebook page**, the **school website** and **School Gateway** for news and information-

<https://www.facebook.com/seghillschool>

<http://www.seghill.northumberland.sch.uk/website>

If you download the **School Gateway app** we don't pay for the messages we send you.