



ARCHDIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM  
**ST. GREGORY'S  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Part of the St Catherine of Siena Academy



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Park Road  
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Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that you are all well and continuing to cope with the challenges that this latest lockdown has presented us with. Firstly, another big thank you and well done to all those of you who are doing such a fantastic job of facilitating Remote Learning with your children at home. Thank you as well to all those of you who continue to provide such a valuable service to our local community as Key Workers during this difficult time. We continue to hope that the ongoing vaccine rollout will mean that the time spent away from school for all of our children can be kept to an absolute minimum.

### **Remote Learning**

We have been very impressed with the both the level of engagement and the quality of work being submitted across all of our Remote Learning platforms so far. Please continue to engage as best you can over the coming weeks and let us know if there is anything we can do differently to improve our current provision.

### **Paper Packs**

One such change that we are making ready for the start of next week is trying to ensure that our paper packs match up as closely as possible with the work being set and uploaded onto Teams and 2Simple by your children's class teachers. This will give you all access to paper copies of the work uploaded online and allow to children to work directly onto worksheets without the need for printing at home. Those of you finding it difficult to access Teams at home will also be able to work on the same activities as those who are on Teams, and all children will then be completing the same activities, whether at home or at school.

These packs will be available to collect from the school front entrance from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January onwards. Once again, please contact school directly if you are shielding or isolating and need a pack delivering to you directly. You are also welcome to collect a pack for another child if you are able to deliver to them, as this will minimise traffic on the school site. If you require some reading books, please contact your child's class teacher and we will endeavour to put some into the paper pack for your child.



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## **Screen-Free Friday**

Another new initiative we will be introducing from this week onwards is 'Screen Free Friday' to try and combat the amount of time children will currently be spending in front of a screen each day. We will still schedule our morning and afternoon Teams meetings but will then set a range of academic and creative activities that can be completed away from a screen to give those eyes a much needed break.

## **A message of support**

Please also know that we continue to appreciate just how challenging it can be to facilitate Remote Learning, whatever your situation may be at home. Whether you are attempting to work from home yourself, facilitate home learning with multiple school age children, or look after younger siblings who are not yet school age, it is a near impossible task to keep all of those plates spinning. I still have very vivid memories of the first lockdown when attempting to work from home and get my then Reception age son to do some writing by labelling the parts of a flower. It did not go well and ended up with one of us hiding in the wardrobe in floods of tears (I will let you decide which of us you think that was).

Working from home, parenting and teaching are all very difficult jobs and they simply cannot all be done effectively at the same time. If you are finding it tough, that is not because you're doing it wrong, it's because it is incredibly difficult..! The novelty of the return to home schooling may well be wearing off again, for both you and your children and we will do our best to keep things fresh and inject some variety to our online resources as this half term progresses but there will still be those inevitable tough days where things seem too much.

I therefore say again that your priority should continue to be your children's, and your own, mental health and wellbeing and when it comes to Home Learning please just do the best that you can. Do try to keep some sort of routine for your child and get them to do at least a couple of pieces of work each day to keep those basic skills fresh (reading, writing and maths facts). On those tough days though, it is fine to prioritise spending some time with your children in a positive way, especially if Home Learning is becoming a battle. Instead of continuing that battle, focus on playing a game together, getting them to help you wash up or make lunch or simply spending time together and reminding them that they are loved and safe.

Please also try not to worry about gaps developing or your children 'falling behind'. Do your best to ensure some Remote Learning takes place each day and remember that all the children across the country are in the same boat at the moment. If there are gaps to fill we will do so on our return to 'normal' schooling. Children are incredibly resilient and adaptable and there was no better example of this than the first lockdown and the subsequent return to school in September. We witnessed first-hand just how well the children were able to settle back into school life and bounce back from any time missed by making great progress throughout the Autumn term. I have no doubt that this will be the case again on their eventual return to school this time around.



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Do remember to contact school if you are struggling with any particular aspect of the above and we will do our best to help in any way we can. Please also continue to remember Mrs Williams and her family in your prayers over the coming days and we will do the same for you and yours.

Until next time best wishes and God bless,



Mr T Boodell

Principal



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