

Dear parents and carers,

What a whirlwind of a couple of weeks it has been. In 12 hours, after the announcement by the Prime Minister, we moved to only being open to children of critical worker families and vulnerable children and establishing a new system of remote learning via Teams and seesaw to ensure all our children continue to receive excellent teaching and learning. It has not always been plain sailing as I know many of your child's passwords did not work or it was a struggle to access Teams. Thank you so much to those of you who were patient and understanding of the fact that with 700 children across the schools, we could not sort it all straight away. I hope you now have correct usernames and passwords but if not, please do call us and we will continue to do our best to help you.

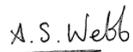
We have received a very high demand for places in both schools during this lockdown compared to the first one and we have a responsibility to protect both our staff and children who attend. If there are too many children, it means that children and staff will still be exposed to too many people therefore negating the benefits of closing the schools to most pupils. Although school is open to children of critical workers, the Government still says that the **safest place for all children is at home** with as little social contact as possible. These places are intended for families who have **no other option (with no other adult at home)** and who are **immediately required in the response to the virus.** Unlike the first lockdown, families are now able to establish a support bubble to look after children from home. Children at home are not 'missing' any learning as children in school are having the same lessons. We understand that it won't always be easy and that children learning at home has its problems but that is not a reason for your child to be in school. It is now our moral and civic duty to remain at home.

We have had many families calling to ask if we can loan a device for children to complete their home learning. We had a small number of laptops allocated to us which we have already loaned out and yesterday had another delivery from the DfE. We have a list of children who have requested a device but I'm going to be honest with you, there are not currently going to be enough to go around. The DfE allocated devices based on the number of children at Newbridge who are eligible for Free School Meals (there is no official allocation of laptops for infant schools yet). This means that we have been allocated about 100 laptops altogether. As I'm sure you can imagine, with over 700 children across both schools, as much as we would like to, we cannot give a device to everyone. Therefore, we are allocating according to a criteria of need and circumstances, but if you have requested a device but now find that you can manage, please let us know so that we can help those who have no device at all. We will be contacting you over the next few days if we are able to lend you a device.

We are so impressed and proud of our whole school community. Our teachers have amazed us with their resilience and determination to continue to provide a fantastic education for your children. They have overcome fears and tried so many new things over the last two weeks. Our children continue to astonish us! The engagement in remote learning has been superb (and that is even with all the teething technology issues we've all had!) Their work on seesaw is of a high standard and I am confident that those that fully engage with the remote learning will return to school with very few gaps in their learning. You as parents and carers have also been fantastic, thrown back into having your children learning from home. We realise that some families are fitting this around working from home and often have more than one child trying to access everything. If time is pressured, the main sessions to concentrate on are the live learning sessions and the activities that follow them as they often follow a sequence of learning. Your support, patience, understanding and such kind words and messages really have meant the world to us.

Please continue to look after yourselves and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Webb

Headteacher of
Newbridge Junior School and
Penhale Infants School & Nursery

Mrs K Denton

Head of School of
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Miss C Morris

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