



West Moors Middle School

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1st February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope that you are all keeping safe and well. Following the Prime Minister's recent announcement we now know that children will not return to school straight after February half term. We understand that the earliest date for return is Monday 8th March 2021 with the next review to consider whether schools can return being on 22nd February 2021. The Government has assured schools that they will be given two weeks advanced notice of children's return to school. As a result, the outcomes of the review on 22nd February 2021 will determine if children will return on 8th March 2021.

This gives us absolute certainty that we will be teaching remotely for the first two weeks after half term. Simultaneously, it also highlights a need for us to scenario plan for two scenarios:

- (1) A return to school on the 8th March 2021 for all children
- (2) A continuation of remote learning for a further period of time

To do this well, our staff need time in their curriculum teams to carefully plan for the next half term, for whichever set of circumstances we are faced with. As detailed in our newsletter before Christmas, our INSET day on Monday 22nd February 2021 will provide time for teachers to plan collaboratively. There will be no lessons or work set for children on that day and on this INSET day there will be no children (who meet the Government's criteria for the categories of vulnerable children and the children of critical workers- [click here](#)) in school. The Government has also confirmed that all schools nationally will be closed for February half term though staff will continue to support Track and Trace procedures. If you would like your child, who falls within one of the Government's categories mentioned above, to attend on site provision after half term, from Tuesday 23rd February 2021, please can you email the school's office on office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk.

If your child wishes to extend their learning on 22nd February 2021 they are welcome to complete the extension and/ or consolidation tasks which they will be given before the end of this half term.

This week is Children's Mental Health, from the 1st-7th February 2021, so our special assembly this afternoon will focus on this year's theme which will be on finding creative ways to 'express yourself'. Reflecting on children's wellbeing, thank you to those who completed the poll I sent out to parents/ carers and children last week, to explore views on whether to provide an unplugged session for children to switch off electrical devices to engage in practical pursuits such as cycling, gardening, running, arts and crafts etc. The findings revealed that 98% of children would value this opportunity. This was supported by the majority of parents/ carers who took part in the poll with 79% agreeing that this would be welcomed. The majority of parents/ carers and children selected Friday afternoon as their preferred day once every week. However the sample size of parents/ carers and children was small which means that we cannot assume that the whole school community would be in agreement.



Headteacher: Dr D Craddock PhD MA BSc (Hons) NPQH
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs D East BSc (Hons) PGCE SENDCo



In light of the hope that schools will reopen after half term, we would therefore like to propose that the timetable in place remains with the exception being that the last Friday in half term will be an Unplugged Friday, as a reward for all their hard work and efforts, where we will provide children with a range of activities that they can choose from e.g. baking, walking, cycling, painting, gardening etc. There will be a screen free alternative for children in school and all children will be encouraged to write a short summary of what they did with their afternoon to share with their tutors with any emailed photographs, with parental permission, posted on our school's Twitter feed. There will also be extension work set for parents/ carers who would prefer their children to continue their remote learning so we are trying to meet everyone's needs.

Our school's Remote Learning Offer and Policy is available on our website- [click here](#).

As part of our School Development Plan, this week we will be carrying out a survey of parents/ carers views on our remote education offer and provision as a whole. We are one of the few schools that have managed to continue our normal school timetable and learning journeys with live lessons, live Science experiments, live fitness classes, live registration, tutor groups and assemblies. Staff have all worked incredibly hard and so your feedback at this time will be welcomed as we want to know how you feel we are doing as a team in these unprecedented times. We would welcome you sharing all the things that we are doing well as well as any areas that you think we could further develop. This survey will only take a few minutes and your support would be greatly appreciated by us all. Please find the link to this survey [here](#) and the closing time/ date is noon on Monday 8th February 2021.

We would like to thank you for your continued support, during this period, as we await definitive guidance from the Government. In the meantime, we will continue to endeavour to navigate these uncertain times with as minimum disruption as possible to you and your families and if there is anything that we can do to help anyone in our school community, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Warm Regards,



Dr Deborah Craddock