



January 2021 Newsletter

Dear parents and carers,

First of all I sincerely hope you are all well and I'm sure you are keeping yourselves as safe as possible under this next 'interesting' period in our lives!

I would like to thank you so much for all the support you have given us so far. It's very frustrating when you hear the phrase 'schools are closed' on the news, when the very opposite is the case. Staff are working harder than ever, either in school with critical worker/vulnerable groups or at home creating /uploading resources and continual viewing and commenting on your children's work. Or juggling both! Thank you for your positive comments about the home learning. We know it's tricky, especially as many of you are also working and / or supporting multiple children. All we can all do is try our best. I have been so impressed with your responses and that you are raising issues which we can support with. It's definitely a team effort to get us through the next month or so.

Seesaw is fully up and running and I'm thrilled with the uptake. Please remember that staff are at the end of the line to help if you are having any issues. Please also understand that not every piece of work will be commented on, some may show a 'like', this does mean that staff have read through it. It would be impossible for staff to give detailed feedback on every piece of main maths and english, but staff will do this as often as they can. On days that staff are in school supporting learning, comments are likely to be less. I know that the parents and children I have talked to so far are really pleased with the personalised comments and teacher videos, it is helping motivate and makes home learning very closely linked to school. As we go into this lockdown we will be monitoring see saw and contacting families if engagement is low to see if we can help.

I think it's worth noting that if your child is responding via video, that these are sent from the main rooms of the house, not your children's bedrooms and also fully clothed e.g not in pjs. Whilst our system is obviously fully secure, I want to make sure that children know that if they are ever involved in videoing and sending on line, there is a safe way to do this, with adults present and appropriately dressed. We can use this experience as reinforcing how your children can keep themselves safe when on line.

Don't forget that the following email addresses are there for you if you have general questions, these are picked up daily by a member of the team.

Foundation Stage
Years 1 and 2
Years 3 and 4
Years 5 and 6

foundation@ks1@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk
ks1@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk
lowerks2@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk
upperks2@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk



[As always you can also contact me directly liz.powell@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk](mailto:liz.powell@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk)

IT updates

If any of you are having any issues with data allowances or devices then please contact me directly at liz.powell@ashbyce.leics.sch.uk . We have already allocated our DFE quota of 5 laptops, but we have more on order.

We will also be receiving Simm Cards from Vodafone which come with 10 GB of data allowance. The DFE are also working with mobile phone providers to increase data allowance or can also provide a 4G wireless router with a 20Gb allowance for the rest of this academic year.

If you would like increased data on your phone, you need to either phone the school office or email me with account holder name, mobile number and mobile network . This link will give you all the information you need to know if you are eligible/ or want further details on which providers are taking part in the scheme. Further details <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/guide-to-collecting-mobile-information/telling-about-offer> but briefly you can apply if:



- You **don't have fixed broadband** at home
- you cannot afford additional data for your devices

Children with access to a mobile phone on one of the following networks might be able to benefit, but not all offer to pay as you go.

- Three
- Smarty
- Virgin Mobile
- EE
- Tesco Mobile
- Sky Mobile

Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage.

Covid updates

If your children are in school then you will obviously have to still keep us informed if they are self-isolating/ have symptoms etc . If a child within your child's bubble does have a positive test result we will obviously have to close it, I will contact you in the same way as I have for previous bubble closures.

We still also need to know if your child is unable to take part in remote learning due to covid symptoms. The DFE have requested this information (numbers only not names) from us daily, so although it doesn't directly affect any other families please do let us know.

We have no idea how long this home learning will last for. Currently school will be closed as normal over the February half term as all members of staff are working full time and will be entitled, and will need, the break. This will remain the case unless we are ordered to by the government. If this is the case it will be the current in school provision with no home learning for that week. I wanted to inform you of this early so that those of you who are critical workers can begin to think about child care provision over the half term week, if required.

Free School Meals

Thank you for your patience over Free School Meal entitlement (please note this is not Universal Free School Meals for all Foundations Stage and Key Stage 1). Aldi vouchers will be given for the last two weeks. If eligible you will be contacted by school to come and pick these vouchers up when they arrive. If you need help urgently please contact R Burton in the school office. From Monday 18th we will be using the same scheme as we did over the Christmas holidays. These will be emailed directly. Please let us know if you have updated your email address since the last vouchers were emailed out in December. Please note that if your child is in school then their meal is provided and therefore you will not receive any vouchers for this period of time.

Critical Workers

Please remember that apart from vulnerable pupils, we are only able to offer places in school for those children whose parents are **critical workers**, the list is on link below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

We are following advice from Leicestershire county council and only considering:

- Families with two critical workers or single parent families who are critical workers
- Critical local authority and public service workers, who cannot perform their tasks from home without their children attending school
- Front line health and social care workers
- Officers and staff from the police and fire service
- School staff
- Early years staff

The full detail can be seen here

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/coronavirus-school-information/educating-children-and-young-people#vulnerable>

The advice remains that if your child can be looked after from home, this includes if a parent is working from home, or using your child care bubble, **then they should do so**. It is vital we keep our numbers as low as possible to reduce the community transmission of COVID 19. We only have a limited number of places so please only apply if you have exhausted all other options. Applications can be made, but please be aware we are only able to allocate spaces if the critical worker status is met.

Take care of each other and stay safe.

L Powell

Headteacher