

Friday 4th February 2022

Dear Parents,

I am aware that many of you continue to be concerned for Mrs Guntrip's well-being. I understand your concerns for her and for the children at the school. Mrs Guntrip remains off sick; as soon as I know more and am able to share any updates with you I will. Due to GDPR I am unable to share the exact nature of Mrs Guntrip's illness, I hope you can appreciate and respect this.

I would like to reassure you that our focus continues to be on ensuring the children are safe, well and are making progress in all areas of the curriculum as well as flourishing with their personal development.

I also fully appreciate that the last few weeks have been difficult for our whole school community in terms of staff absences and the need for supply teachers. We strive to ensure that all adults are in school as we know this is how children learn best, from the staff that know them best. However, this is not always possible, particularly at the moment due to COVID and other personal reasons. Wherever possible, we seek supply staff that are familiar with our school and endeavour to have adults that the children know. I, Mr Thorne and Miss Ball (support staff from ASM) have ensured smooth transition as best as we can to ensure minimal disruption to children's well-being and learning. Mr Thorne and I have also been teaching across the school when supply cover has not been available. Please bear with us as we navigate through this difficult time for all school.

Across the Trust, we are seeing an increasing number of staff being off with COVID and some of those will be affected for longer periods of time. We are also anticipating that the staff will continue to contract COVID-19 and may suffer long covid as the term goes on. I appreciate that it can be unsettling for parents if your child's teacher is off and there are cover teachers in place.

Rest assured that we are doing all we can to support absence, but the reality is Covid-19 is going to result in high staff absence this term and I wanted you to prepare you for this. In the Autumn Term over 30% of teachers and support staff across the Trust were absent due to Covid reasons and this will continue. Sadly, this is out of our control, and we are doing all we can to minimise the impact on your child. Supply teachers are in short supply, and we are doing all that we can to keep learning face to face. I cannot promise that this will continue and if staffing levels become critical, we may need to close some classes for periods of time. We will of course provide remote learning but if the class teacher is ill, this will not be live streaming as we will not have the staffing to do this.



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As ever, if you have concerns or would like to discuss your child's learning, please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. This can be done via email, at the end of the day or, if required, you can organise a meeting.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

Mrs Stephens
Executive Head of Newton and Teign Hub