



Update 2nd February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Recent announcements

I am sure that you will have all seen the announcement on 27th January when the Prime Minister spoke in Parliament about the Government's plans for the "full reopening" of schools. In his statement he confirmed that it will not be possible to increase the numbers of pupils attending schools immediately after the February half term. On the 26th January, the DfE also confirmed that schools will not be asked to remain open over the February half term and the school will therefore be closed for all of the children in the week beginning Monday 15th February with key worker provision re commencing on Monday 22nd February 2021.

The Prime minister has indicated that the **earliest** the government believes it will be safe to begin to increase pupil numbers will be from Monday 8th March. While there remain too many unknowns to be able to say with certainty that schools will begin to be able to bring back more pupils on that date, the statement does at least provide a degree of clarity about the government's position at least in the short term.

We have worked closely with the local South Lambeth Schools Partnership and the wider Lambeth Schools Partnership throughout the pandemic to ensure that our practices are in line with other schools in the locality. Currently 135-168 of our children are attending each day which is by far the highest number of any local schools. All staff are working incredibly hard and at full capacity - for which I am extremely grateful and I know many of you have taken the opportunity to thank them.

It is important to be aware that if the Government make an announcement that children can return to school, whatever the plans are, we will need to make adjustments in order to make it work. We all want children back in school, but will have to be realistic about whether it is safe and when and how we do so.

Lateral Flow Device Testing

Staff have now been issued with lateral flow tests to test themselves twice weekly. This is welcome for staff who are understandably anxious given the current rate of infections and deaths in the borough. We are also pressing for vaccination of all staff in schools as we feel that this is necessary to keep schools open. However, we currently have 10 members of staff who have tested positive and are unwell with Covid. This is obviously affecting our ability to keep bubbles open in the short term. Please be extra vigilant during this time and take care to ensure that you keep safe and well.

Home Learning Expectations

We are also aware how challenging this lockdown has been for parent/carers and thought it would be helpful to clarify home learning expectations.

In the first lockdown schools were re-designated as childcare and therefore had no lawful requirement to provide remote learning for home learners. That is not the case for this lockdown. Schools are still designated as schools and therefore we have to, by law, provide home learning that equals 3 hours for EYFS/KS1 and 4 hours for KS2. This includes the time taken to complete the tasks.

However, as our blended learning policy (available on our website) states:

As a school, we recognise the demands on families and school staff during lockdown – balancing the parent/carer work demands with school-age children’s learning demands, needs of younger children and the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The work set for children and expectations placed on school staff aim to help everyone balance these demands.”

From a school’s perspective on developing your children’s progress and learning, our basic expectations are that:

- Weekly small group zooms are attended consistently: tailored learning will be happening in these sessions therefore they will be beneficial to your child’s progress.
- At least 2 pieces of core learning (i.e. English, maths, science, spelling, phonics) are happening each day and are uploaded. Feedback, which has been proven to be very effective in moving learning on, can then be given and your child knows their learning is being seen and valued.

It is important to remember that it is normal for your child to struggle sometimes and to get things wrong. Making mistakes is an essential part of the learning process. It is useful for teachers to see your child’s mistakes as this will help them to assess your child’s needs and to address these misconceptions. Think of your role as being a facilitator for your child’s home learning - you are not expected to be their teacher, just to support them in doing their best with their learning.

Things currently in place to support you and your child stay motivated and engaged:

- Weekly timetable with expected timings - this lets you know the maximum time expected for each session, it also gives an overview of the learning therefore the sequence of learning is explicit
- Live PE and mindfulness sessions - we know how important it is to stay healthy in body and mind so these are here to provide some activity and some relaxation
- 3x weekly whole class zoom check ins - being connected to their classmates is very important and these check ins give a chance to do that and maintain a sense of community

Top tips for using J2e and effective home learning:



TIP NO. 1 Contact the class teacher or school for support where needed - this includes the need for support with a lack of data or a device for children to work on.

TIP NO. 2 Try to help your child find a quiet place to work. This may not always be possible but headphones can help.

TIP NO. 3 Offer encouragement and praise when they complete tasks. Encourage your children to use the J2e voice recorder to communicate to their teacher what they have done well - identifying what they have done well boosts their confidence and motivation.

TIP NO 4 Create a timetable for the day so that they know what is coming up. Use the weekly overview on J2e to help set realistic expectations around the length of activities.

TIP NO 5 Remember to give children regular breaks for water, fresh air where possible, and snacks. If they are struggling with an activity, then try giving them a break and then returning to it.

TIP NO. 6 When uploading, use the camera function on the main J2e page - this will upload directly to your child's page therefore saving you time.

TIP NO. 7 Teach your child how to upload their work - Y2 onwards should be able to do this using the camera function mentioned above. This builds independence and organisational skills.



TIP NO. 8 Remember to allow time for exercise - take a walk, play outside or use the PE task. Keep an eye out for events such as the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch which took place last weekend and are a way of enjoying the outdoors and supporting worthwhile causes.



Last weekend's beautiful sunset

TIP NO. 9 Read every day. Read to your child, with your child, listen to them read. Read comics and picture books and that book you loved when you were a child. When you need some time to yourself, turn on an audiobook - those count too.

TIP NO. 10 Play. Play board games and card games. Play hide and seek. Have LEGO competitions.

TIP NO. 11 Limit screen time beyond set work and use of consoles where possible.

Further support for parents/carers:

We are holding live zoom sessions next week for parents/carers on how to support your child/ren effectively at home during lockdown. All zooms sessions will take place at 11.30am. They will be recorded and then put on J2e pages.

Dates are as follows:

- EYFS: Mon 8th Feb
- Y1: Tues 9th Feb

- Y2: Weds 10th Feb
- Y3: Fri 12th Feb
- Y4: Fri 12th Feb
- Y5: Tues 9th Feb
- Y6: Mon 8th Feb

Sessions will be led by the year group leader and a member of the senior leadership team. The sessions will be specific to your year group but not your child. There will be the opportunity to ask questions during the session using the chat function only. If you have specific questions regarding your child, then please contact your child's class teacher directly.

National Survey about home learning

Our school has been selected to participate in a national survey about how children are learning at home and the impact lockdown-learning is having on family life.

To help us do this, we would like you to download and use a free survey app called Parent Ping: <https://bit.ly/parentping> They will ask you a few questions each day and show you see how other parents are coping in lockdown.

When you first sign in to the app it will ask you the school name (Julian's Primary School) and for the first part of the postcode (SE27 OJF). Please do this carefully using only the SE27 postcode so we can make sure all your answers are included!

The benefits to you:

- See how other parents answer the questions!
- A chance to win a Chromebooks in the national weekly draw
- A chance to win a £30 Amazon voucher in our school's weekly draw

The benefits to the school:

- When at least 60 parents/carers are answering the survey questions each day, we will be sent a set of results that compares what you think to what all parents/carers in the country think. This will help us better understand your needs and challenges around home-learning.

You don't have to join in if you don't want to, it's completely voluntary, but this is a great time to share your opinions, not just with us but with other parents and with the people who make decisions about education in England.

If you would like to know more about the project, please see <https://parentping.co.uk/bigsurvey>

And finally....

Please remember that, first and foremost, you are parents/carers, not teachers, and your child/ren's welfare comes first. Please do contact us if you are having any difficulties in any area; technology, motivation, engagement or just to say you're all OK! Remember, we are here to support you in any way we can.



As many of you will have guessed by now, I am a bit of a Charlie Mackesy fan. His drawings seem to capture the mood of the current pandemic and his book is well worth a read. I was struck by this rather poignant image which was sent to me the other day. It is difficult to imagine when we will be able to return to this sort of “normal” again. Although I remain ever hopeful that it will be some time soon, it does make me feel a little sad! I know that many of you will have not seen parents and grandparents, friends and loved ones for some time now and that is incredibly hard.

In the words of Smitri Halls, we need to remember that “life is never pure sunshine.... We have all had to embark on a journey we didn’t expect, facing difficulty and danger, often separated from friends and loved ones. We may feel alone. But we are not. There may be rain. But there are rainbows.... symbolising hope in these troubled times.....”



Stay safe and well!

Alison, Becky and Sam