



# Friars Primary School & Nursery

Part of the Portico Academy Trust

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**PORTICO**  
ACADEMY TRUST

opening doors, unlocking potential

**CEO – Mrs C. Woolf**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are sure you will have seen the news last night that means we are now going to be closed to the majority of pupils until at least the February half term.

While we are sad to not be able to open our doors to all of our children, we are pleased that despite a few teething problems today we are generally in a strong position to offer remote learning via Seesaw which should make our home learning even better than it was during the lockdown last year.

Parental feedback back then told us that despite the children enjoying the work set and receiving their feedback online, they also wanted more live interaction with their teachers. With this in mind, we have taken the decision to do a greater mixture of live, recorded and guided work.

We hope you have now had the chance to see the children's timetables that are now live on Seesaw and the website. Click the link and find your year group to view these <https://www.friarsprimary.co.uk/blended-learning>

Our first live lessons started this morning and it was great to see so many children joining these sessions. Our teachers reported how well each session went and how pleased they were to have this valuable contact with the children. Thank you to the parents that contacted us to let us know about the few minor issues they encountered.

A number of parents have expressed how difficult it is to work with multiple children and limited devices in the same household. Firstly, we do fully understand how difficult remote learning is for families with multiple children, many of us find ourselves in the same position in our own homes. As we shared in our earlier letters, all we can ask is for parents and children to do their best to access as much learning as is possible. All of our lessons will be recorded so can be watched at different times to those on the timetables. Breaks and lunches have been scheduled on each plan so it is possible that when one child is having lunch, another could be using a device etc.

We were also made aware that having suitable working devices could be an issue for many parents. Thank you to those parents who pre-warned us that they might face difficulties by completing our technology survey in the autumn term. Last term, we allocated the few spare laptops provided by the Department for Education to eligible disadvantaged children and yesterday, we also made a further application for a limited number of additional devices that again will be made available to eligible disadvantaged children when they arrive. We are unclear as to how long it will be until they are with us.

Due to our teachers being fully employed delivering online learning we are not in a position at this stage to offer paper packs of work. We will continue to review this situation.

As with all of these things, we have also learnt some lessons this morning, which we would like to share with you.

Some parents stressed that when clicking on a live lesson link, they received an error message saying 'not registered as a portico account'. Having spoken to our IT support, it seems that this can occur when MS Teams is already logged on to an existing account for example a parent's work account. If this continues, please try logging out of your MS Teams account if you have one active and retrying the link.

If you received a message stating that you need a Microsoft password to enter the lesson, this issue has now been resolved. None of our links should require a password and by receiving the link on Seesaw, you should have access to the lesson. All of our teachers are aware and are testing the links on dummy pupil accounts before they are sent out so they should all work successfully.

We have also been aware that some of the icons on MS Teams may not be available on all devices. For example, when using a phone, the chat function does not always seem to be available. If you find that this is not shown, the child can still use the 'raise hand' icon and then unmute to verbally ask a question or respond to their teacher. Alternatively, any questions or problems can be raised with their teachers directly via Seesaw.

Some activities on Seesaw also appear to be difficult to see or access depending on what device you use. Unfortunately, this is just a drawback of using one learning platform across a range of different operating systems and is largely out of our hands. However, our teachers have been made aware and will try to avoid the activities that seem to cause the most issues moving forward.

As you will appreciate, this style of learning is a learning curve for us all and we are sure that any issues will be 'ironed-out' further as our teacher confidence and our understanding of how best to use the technology on offer grows.

If you do experience any issues with technology and home learning, please let us know by completing our online survey. The link can be found here;

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=itiMSBXflk2j9Bz-n-ErI0bCB-ga8xLqdx3lRe4LsBUMjFNQ1JNUTcxRUE2NUo5U0oxV1VFVU0zTy4u>

Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below;



Finally, we are still awaiting for the up to date position on the free school meal vouchers, we will provide you with an update as soon as we hear. You will receive a voucher for this week, which will be back dated if the situation is not resolved

Thank you for your support and patience during these ever-challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

*C. McClay*

*S. Roche*

Mr. C. McClay  
Principal

Mr. S. Roche  
Vice Principal