



# LANCHESTER E.P. (Cont.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Weekly Bulletin 4: Friday 9th July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I shall start this letter the same way as the last one. What a difference a week makes! This time though – in a negative way.

This should be the final communication of the school year – but something tells me that it won't be! However, it is the final weekly letter of what has turned out to be quite some year. I think last academic year was just the warm up for the marathon that this academic year has turned out to be.

I am not sure about you, but my head is spinning after this week and you must all dread seeing that tweet, Facebook post, text or email. I cannot even begin to think about the impact this half-term has had on you all as parents – those trying to work, juggle siblings, care for pre-school children, organise childcare... the list goes on.

I don't know whether it is any comfort, but we are not alone in this – Covid-19 has swept through many schools in the North-East in the last few weeks. I do think that the 3 days we were closed did help to break the cycle, but sadly, it was only a matter of time before it would begin again.

Obviously, I am sure you will have heard the news this week that from September, the bubbles in schools are to be scrapped. From 16<sup>th</sup> August, only the child/adult testing positive will need to isolate and other close contacts will not so this should, in theory, help avoid the chaos of the last few weeks. However, I have not had any further information as to how this will work in schools and what, if any, other things will be put in place to support this new approach. I have a feeling this will come out in the middle of the school holidays for us to put into place for September.

This week has caused a total roller-coaster of emotions with so many positive lateral flow tests and a mixture of positive and negative PCR tests. It is so tough for classes and year groups who have to isolate – it is just totally miserable. But the highlight of my week was being able to tell Year 6 parents and staff that they could return to school – I am not sure who was happier – the children, parents or staff! It is just so imperative that our Year 6 can enjoy their last few days together and we just want to be able to send them off in true E.P. style too!

However, I am absolutely devastated from a personal perspective, that I will not be able to play a part in the final days with our wonderful Year 6 cohort. I have to isolate until midnight on Friday and am totally gutted that I will not be able to share in these final, special days with Year 6 after spending so much time with them over the last 7 – 8 years. I will be with them all in spirit, though and will participate in some way in their leavers' events. This, for me though, really is the final straw in what has been the toughest year ever!

## **Staff Departures**

Next week is the final week for two of our staff. Mrs Janette Marklew is retiring from her role as our Business Manager after 9 years with us. I know she is very much looking forward to the next stage in her life but that she will miss everyone in our school community. She has dedicated so much of her life to supporting schools, including ours, and especially after this last year, is ready for a more steady pace of life!

Miss Amy Watchman has also finished her apprenticeship with us and is moving onto a new Teaching Assistant role in another school. She started with us just prior to the lockdown last March so has certainly had an eventful 18 months with us! We wish her all the very best as she starts out in her career.

## **Trampolines and Bouncy Slide**

We were so disappointed when they had to cancel at the last minute due to the owners having Covid symptoms. Nothing seems to be going right for us at the moment! Rather than trying to get a different company at such short notice, we decided to just leave it for this term and hire them again for a special 'fun' day in the Autumn term – not great for the Year 6 children but there is nothing we could really do at such short notice.

### **Raffle**

We have some wonderful raffle prizes again which are well worth winning! We are delaying the raffle draw until Tuesday next week to allow for any last minute tickets to be purchased and also to enable us to get the hampers organised. We will make the draw live with the children over Zoom on Tuesday. Our prizes are:

- Summer of Fun Hampers x 3
- Indoor Summer of Fun Hamper
- Chocolate and Sweets Delight Hamper
- Spa and Home Day Hamper
- Bottles of alcohol

### **Summer Fair**

We are very aware of how tough it is for children isolating at home whilst others are having fun in school. It is hard getting the balance right – so that everyone doesn't miss out on everything. Year 3 and Year 4 will still be taking part in some of the games planned at the summer fair today. They will still be able to take part in Name the Teddy, Guess the Number of Sweets and the Treasure Hunt – albeit virtually and on the Zoom calls with their teachers. But we hope it helps them to still feel a part of the day.

### **End of Year School Reports**

These were due to go out today but unfortunately, events have overtaken us all recently and they have been delayed. I do apologise but due to so many staff isolating recently and the inevitable time taken in re-organising things, these have just not yet been finalised. They will all go out with the children on either Monday or Tuesday of next week. Please accept our apologies for this delay.

### **PE Kits for Year 1 Children**

This is a reminder for all parents of current Reception children. As the children will now be joining Year 1 in September, they will need a P.E. t-shirt in their team colour. These can be ordered from our uniform suppliers Moette, either from the shop in Langley Park, or via this link: [Lanchester EP School \(moette.co.uk\)](https://moette.co.uk). Please make sure that you order the colour of their team though: Romans (Red), Danes (Blue), Normans (Green) and Saxons (Yellow). Thank you.

### **School Dinner Information for September**

This is a reminder to all parents of Year 2 children that once they start Year 3, dinners are no longer free of charge (unless you are eligible for Free School Meals due to a low income) and they will have to be paid for from September. The cost of school meals have gone up from September to: £2.15 per day – a total of £10.75 per week. This can all be paid on ParentPay and we ask that they are paid for at least one week in advance. If your child is currently on school meals but would like a packed lunch from September, please email the school office so that we do not charge you for meals that are not take. Thank you for your help with this matter.

### **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – Registers to Remain Open until 10am**

We are all very aware that England are playing in the final of the Euros on Sunday evening and that this is the biggest match in most of our lifetimes (even mine!) and certainly that of the children. We realise that many of our children will be staying up to watch the match on Sunday evening and may feel slightly tired on Monday morning. The staff are aware of this and will be expecting some tired children in school on Monday!

We will also hold the registers open until 10am on Monday so that children can sleep in slightly later on Monday morning if needed. It has been 55 years since the last time there was a match as big as this and it might be another 55 years until it happens again!

However, do not worry – all the staff will be in school for the normal time as I also expect many children to arrive for the usual school start time. Please note – Year 6 MUST be in school at the normal time as their buses will be leaving promptly for their walk. However, they can all sleep on the bus on the way up there!

### **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July – Year 6 Walk**

Year 6 will enjoy a day at Bamburgh and Seahouses on Monday and will leave at 9.15am and return for 5pm. This is always a highlight of the school year and whilst it will only be their year group this year, I am sure they will all still have a wonderful time. They will need to be dressed appropriately for a walk and the beach, will need a packed lunch, plenty of fluids, waterproof, sun hat and sun cream. As mentioned previously, this is only for the children and staff this year. Sadly, we do not feel it is appropriate to have parents join us on this occasion due to the current situation.

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Moving Up Session**

This is going to look very different this year as we are unable to have children move classrooms or have a session with their new teacher as this jeopardises the bubbles. So, what we are doing instead is having an outdoor session where the children will meet their teacher and they will also have a virtual tour of their new classroom.

Children who are isolating at home will have a Zoom meeting with their new teacher in their new classroom so that they do not miss out on this important event either. The children will be told on Monday when these Zoom sessions will take place – this is only for those who are isolating.

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Nursery New Starters Zoom Meeting at 4.30pm**

A meeting over Zoom will take place at 4.30pm on Wednesday for all our September Nursery New Starters. Please just click on the link below. We are looking forward to meeting you all, virtually, and explaining more about the organisation for September. The link is below and all new starters in Nursery have also been sent this via email:

<https://zoom.us/j/99665861362?pwd=RDZNR1lUa2tnZUZTMtVhcGV3eXUwUT09>

Meeting ID: 996 6586 1362

Passcode: 942270

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Drop In Zoom Session for Reports – 4 – 6pm**

The end of year reports will go out at the beginning of next week and if there is anything you would like to discuss about these with your child's class teacher, please email them and they will book you a time over Zoom to meet to talk this through. Obviously, the reports are, once again, very comprehensive and usually, there is not a lot to discuss but we do like to give you this opportunity. The link will be sent to you by your child's class teacher if you request a meeting.

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Summer Barbecue and Camp Fire for Year 6**

This will take place from 6.30pm until 10pm on Wednesday evening for our Year 6 children. They should come to school through the Junior Hall Door and they will be able to enjoy some time together outside (where it is Covid safe), have a barbecue and then enjoy a camp fire on the school field. We are sure this will be a very special evening for them all. Please complete [this link](#) to let us know whether your child is able to attend as we need these numbers for catering. The deadline for completing this is Monday 12 noon. Thank you.

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July – Year 6 Leavers' Service at 1.30pm**

This year, the service will be held on the school yard and will be live streamed to parents/grandparents over the following link. Please log on in good time so that you know everything is in order. At least this way you will all still be able to be part of this special event.

<https://zoom.us/j/98889733227?pwd=MXEzcEpXZWxrMkRRUE1mYUJ6N3RCdz09>

Meeting ID: 988 8973 3227

Passcode: 671829

### **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July – Year 6 Leavers' Assembly at 10am**

Our Leavers' Assembly will start at 10am on Friday morning and this, too, will be held over Zoom. The link for this is below. Again, I would suggest you logging on early to check everything works for this too.

<https://zoom.us/j/93375327395?pwd=NTRBWnNmZ09OSnc0a2FSNUJjZWhlZz09>

Meeting ID: 933 7532 7395

Passcode: 243767

### **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July – Year 6 Finishing at 3.30pm**

On Friday, we would like our Year 6 children to leave slightly later than the rest of the school. We will open up the bottom yard so that parents can come and meet them on the yard, take any final photographs of them and then leave from the bottom yard where all the staff will be there to say goodbye to them all. This worked really well last year and so I hope they don't mind spending an extra 15 minutes in school on their final day!

All parents are very welcome to come onto the yard from 3.20pm on Friday for their final photographs once the rest of the school have left.

### **End of Year Questionnaire**

This should have been with you last week – apologies for the delay. We really value your opinions and comments and always discuss your suggestions and ideas with the whole staff and governing body at the start of the new year. The link is below for this year's questionnaire. Please take the time to complete this – it will not take you long and your opinions are invaluable. Many thanks.

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nQP32h\\_HBU2bpIIJ4QL0zspgHwMT8S9HoKOJAHDz6ThURUkyQ1pWRIExUkxXRVI3V0Q4MDRIUEs0Vy4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nQP32h_HBU2bpIIJ4QL0zspgHwMT8S9HoKOJAHDz6ThURUkyQ1pWRIExUkxXRVI3V0Q4MDRIUEs0Vy4u)

### **COVID-19 Information**

The symptoms for this virus have changed slightly and if you or your child have any sign of a cough, cold, headache, fever, or loss of smell or taste – they MUST go for a PCR test. You can book this either online: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or calling 119. Reminder: If your child displays any of the key symptoms of COVID-19 whilst they are in school you will be contacted to come and collect them and they will not be able to come back into school until they have a negative PCR test result or have completed their period of isolation (if they get a positive result). If your child has siblings, they will also need to be collected at the same time.

If your child has COVID-19 symptoms at home or needs to isolate, please make sure you let the school office know either via email or on the absence line. Likewise, if a child tests positive on an evening or during a weekend, please email Mrs Davis on [j.davis@lanchesterep.net](mailto:j.davis@lanchesterep.net) with the email subject 'COVID-19 Positive Result' and include your child's name and class group in the email text.

Please also remember that LFT tests can be ordered for all adults to take at home. Just click on the link for more information about this: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/CovidLFT>

### **Final Thoughts and Reflections on 2020 – 2021**

I said at the end of last academic year that it had been the most challenging in my whole 15 years of headship. I have to say that last year was an absolute walk in the park compared to this academic year. I class myself as a strong person, but I have been left in tears and on my knees with the events of this year. However, what has made it bearable is the tremendous support that I have had from a terrific group of people – the staff and yourselves – and of course our wonderful children.

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to each and every member of our staff team. They have all come to work every day this year, without a single complaint and with a smile on their faces to work with your children. Many of them have had to isolate on numerous occasions as a result of coming to work. They have had to cancel holidays, forego time with their extended families and their mental health and well-being have been impacted too. They have been cheerful, supportive and I could not ask for a better group of people to work with. Our team spirit is second to none and I would like to publicly thank each and every one of them for being so dedicated and committed and for the great comradeship and mutual support we give each other. A true team!

Secondly, yourselves. You have all been incredible this year. You have had to support your own children through all this and yet at the same time, try to juggle your work commitments too. It has been almost unmanageable

at times and yet you have ensured your children attended the Zoom lessons and completed their work. Your dedication and commitment to supporting them has been superb.

You have also supported us too. I have been overwhelmed with the number of lovely emails, letters, cards and comments on social media – you have kept me going throughout the year too. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. We are a very special community and I like to think that the mutual support we have had for each other has helped us all through an exceptionally challenging time in our lives.

Finally, the children. Your children make us smile every day! Each and every one of them is so special and they make our job the best one in the world! My one huge regret of this whole pandemic will be not being around next week to say my final goodbyes to Year 6. I have managed to avoid self-isolation for 18 months but no time could be worse than not being in school for the final week of term. I just hope they all know how much time, respect and care I have for each and every one of them.

The summer break is needed by many of us now. I think we all need some time away to re-charge our batteries and to spend some much needed time with our loved ones. Let's hope next year is a better one for us all! I think the quote below sums us up perfectly:

***'The greatness of a community is most accurately measured  
by the compassionate actions of its members.'***

On behalf of the whole staff team and the governing body, have a lovely summer break and take care. We shall see you back in school on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021!

Yours sincerely,

*Jane Davis*

Mrs Jane Davis  
(Head Teacher)