

8 January 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

“When they go low, we go high.”- Michelle Obama

Dear Parents/Carers,

The government introduced a national lockdown which took effect at 00.01am on Wednesday 6 January 2021. This meant that schools would need to move to teaching online until at least the February half term. The school had already begun preparations to move all learning online on 4 January 2021 and has therefore been a little ahead of the curve. A detailed description of our remote learning offer is attached. Please take some time to read through this carefully as it includes a typical weekly timetable. We have also distributed hard copies of a home learning pack that includes CGP Maths and English books, Science booklets for Upper School, Activity books for EYFS, and Power Maths books to name a few. **If you have not already collected the pack for your child, please ensure you collect it between 2.00pm-3.30pm on Monday 11 January 2020 using the Albert Road entrance.**

Your child’s class teachers have been working hard to produce videos for the teaching of four daily lessons. All pupils will have access to daily virtual lessons, which include Maths, English and foundation subjects such as History and Science. These lessons are recorded by teachers and will be available from 9.00am each morning on Class Dojo. Each video contains key teaching, as well as instructions for your child’s independent task, in which they will apply what they have learnt from the video. Those independent tasks need to be completed in the appropriate book, e.g. Power Maths pupil book, Science booklet, exercise book. Once pupils have completed their independent work, they must take a photo of it and upload it to the appropriate activity page on Class Dojo so their teacher can see how they have got on. For other independent tasks, pupils will be required to complete an online worksheet within Class Dojo.

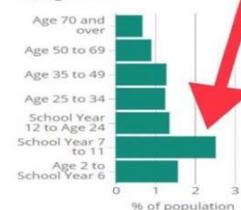
The school has remained open to provide childcare and teaching to the children of key workers. The school takes a firm stance that this is an essential service, limited to those who do not have the capacity to keep children at home. The decision to close schools was not made lightly by the government. The data from the Office of National Statistics shows that both primary and secondary aged children had the highest percentage of infections for the week ending 12 December 2020.

COVID-19 infections, hospital admissions and deaths by age

Estimated percentage of the population testing positive for COVID-19 in the week ending 12 December, hospital admission rates per 100,000 in the week ending 13 December and deaths registered in the week ending 4 December 2020, by age, England

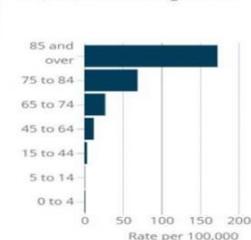
Infections

Estimated percentage of the population testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) on nose and throat swabs, week ending 12 Dec



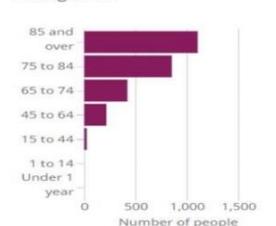
Hospital admissions

Overall COVID-19 positive hospital admission rates per 100,000, week ending 13 Dec



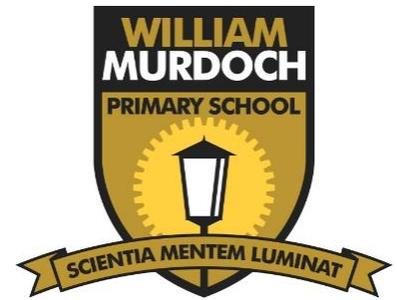
Deaths

Number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) by age group, England, registered week ending 4 Dec



Source: Coronavirus (COVID-19) weekly insights: latest health indicators in England, 18 December 2020

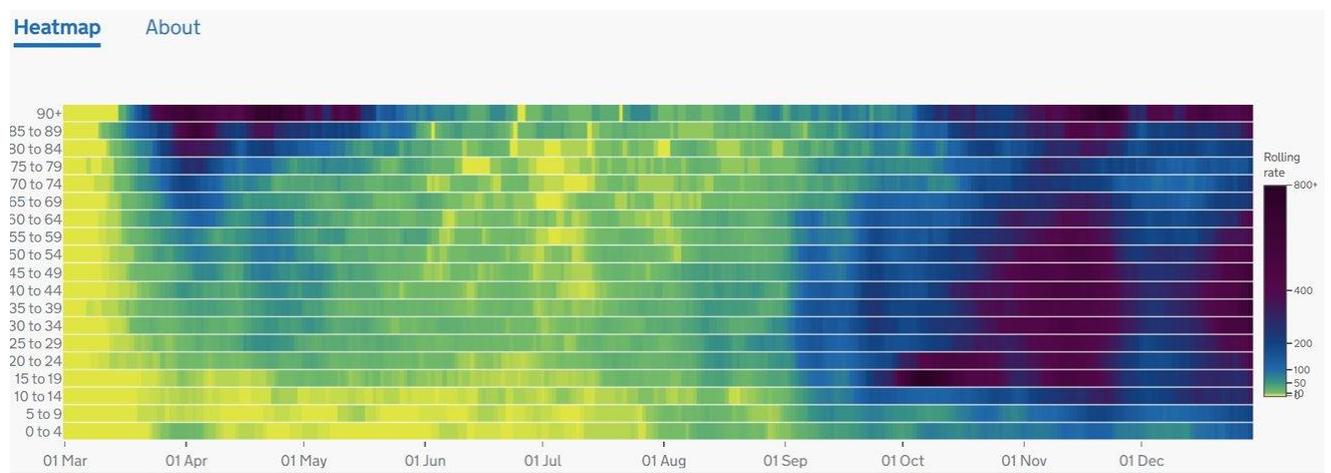
Office for National Statistics



In a letter to Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education, Birmingham Leader Councillor Ian Ward wrote about the rising rates of infection in primary children:

'Of equal concern is the rise in rates in the 5 to 9 age group which have increased from 93/100k on the 7 December to 174/100k on the 27 December. Similarly, in the 10 to 14 age group rates have increased from 208/100k to 281/100k over the same period.'

The following heatmap shows a pictorial representation of the increase in cases amongst primary and secondary children and highlights why the government introduced the lockdown:



In a SAGE (the government scientific advisory group) paper on COVID-19 transmission in children, dated 17 December 2020, children were found more likely to be the index case (i.e. bring the infection home). Compared to everyone aged 17 and over, the likelihood was 7 times higher for children aged 12-16 years and almost 3 times higher for children under 12 to be the index case. This paper was "approved prior to the emergence of data on the new variant."

Free School Meal Vouchers

On Wednesday 6 January, Gavin Williamson, informed parliament that the government will be re-launching the free school meal voucher scheme (not Universal Infant Free School Meals) to support disadvantaged families during this latest lockdown. Unfortunately, the school has not received any further updates about this. We will be in touch as soon as we know more. In the meantime, if there are any families in need of urgent support to access a food parcel, please contact school on enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk.

Well-being Calls

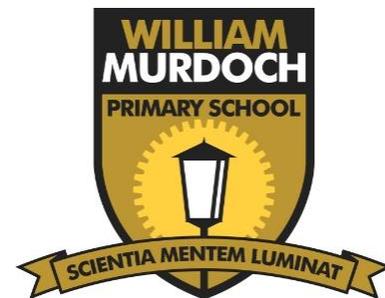
All families will have received a well-being call this week from a member of school staff, typically the teaching assistant working in the year group your child is in. This will be a regular occurrence as we look to support families and ensure remote learning takes place. As staff are ringing from home, the telephone call will show up as NO CALLER ID. If you miss the call, please be aware that there is no need to ring school back, as a follow up call will be made either the same day or the next day.

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTROBUS ROAD, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, B21 9NT, TEL: 0121 554 0999, FAX: 0121 554 6332

EMAIL: enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk, WEB: www.williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk

HEADTEACHER: MR M. SINGH



Digital divide

A number of families have, during the well-being calls and in emails to us, explained the technical difficulties they are having with limited or no digital devices for the children to use. The school has received a small number of laptops that are being configured and will be distributed on the basis of most need.

Some families have also explained that children are working from a mobile phone with a limited data plan. The government has introduced a scheme that temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education if their face-to-face education is disrupted. The request must come through the school. You can request mobile data increases for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

Children with access to a mobile phone on one of the following networks might be able to benefit:

- Three
- Smarty
- Virgin Mobile
- EE
- Tesco Mobile
- Sky Mobile
- O2

Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage.

To request extra mobile data, you will need to email us the following information:

- the account holder's name
- their mobile number (a number beginning with '07')
- their mobile network
- whether they pay monthly or pay as they go

BBC Educational Programming

The BBC has confirmed that it will air educational programming during the lockdown period to support home learning. Starting on Monday, the lessons will include three hours of primary school programming every weekday on CBBC, and at least two hours for secondary pupils on BBC2.

The primary programmes, which will be broadcast on CBBC from 9.00am every day, will include BBC Live Lessons and BBC Bitesize Daily as well as Our School, Celebrity Supply Teacher, Horrible Histories and Operation Ouch. BBC2 will be the place to go for secondary students with programming to support the GCSE curriculum, including adaptations of Shakespeare plays alongside science, history and factual titles.

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Office Hours

The school office hours during the lockdown period are as follows:
Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 4.00pm
Lunch is taken 12.00pm to 1.00pm

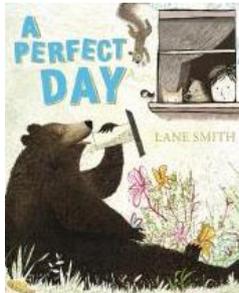
Please also do not hesitate to contact school via email on enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk and we will aim to respond to you as soon as possible (within two working days).

William Murdoch Art Competition

Over the next few weeks, the school shall be running a fortnightly Art Competition. This will be a great opportunity for your child to be creative and have lots of fun at the same time. The title of the first competition is 'Gratitude' and the work produced should explore something that your child is grateful for. Perhaps your child could create a piece of work relating to someone in their family, a hobby that they enjoy or a place that is special to them. Your child is able to use materials of their choice for this competition but please be mindful to only use materials that are available in the home. Once the artwork has been completed, they are to upload a photo of it to Class Dojo. The deadline for entries is 20 January 2021, with the winners having their work celebrated in the weekly newsletter and the on the school Twitter account. We look forward to seeing the work produced very soon.

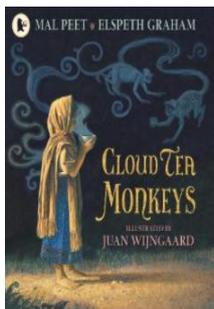
Book of the Week – Mr Panichi

Lower School



A Perfect Day - Lane Smith

A patterned text describes in simple terms what made a particular day perfect for several animals in turn. Having established an idyll, the animals' peace is disturbed by the arrival of Bear who appears in the pictures but is not named in the text until the end of the story. The illustrations show why the perfection of the day is now in the past tense for each animal, thanks to Bear's antics.

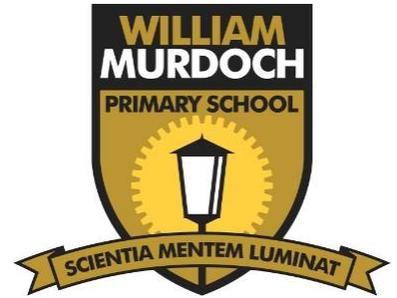


Upper School

Cloud Tea Monkeys - Mal Peet & Elspeth Graham

This tender book will warm your heart and make you SMILE. A sentimental tale from India, it tells the story of Tashi, a little girl who has to pick tea when her mother becomes ill. Too short to reach the best shoots, all seems lost until she meets the cloud tea monkeys. A story of how kindness repays kindness, its beauty lies within its wonderful storytelling and equally wonderful illustrations.

KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



I understand that this is an anxious time for everyone and we will continue to keep you updated with any developments. Please do everything you can to stay safe and I thank everyone for their continued support as we work together during these worrying and anxious times.

Stay safe. Stay well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Singh', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mr M Singh
Headteacher

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