



# St Osyth C of E Primary School

A member of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

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Friday 8th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Wow, what a huge amount has changed, in relation to school, in just one week. It hardly seems possible that only 8 days ago we all thought that school would be opening to all children as usual.

Firstly, thank you for your support during this week when we have been setting home learning for Wednesday to Friday and undertaking a massive amount of work ready for the launch of St Osyth Virtual School.

## **What are the main ideas and aims of St Osyth Virtual School?**

1. To provide children with the best primary education that is possible during this national lockdown.
2. To support the well-being of children.
3. To support children, staff and families being as safe as they can be.

Essentially, we are moving as much of our school online as we can.

## **What live and recorded lessons will be available for children?**

The attached timetable gives you all the lessons available for your child. As a minimum, we are giving your child:

1. 5 English lessons each week – one a day.
2. 5 maths lessons each week – one a day.
3. 5 fitness sessions each week – one a day.
4. 2 topic lessons each week
5. 1 science lesson each week
6. 1 RE lesson each week
7. 1 skills based PE lesson each week
8. 1 Relationship, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) lesson each week.

When you look at the timetable you will see that with the live lessons, and the learning activities that your children will be set to do outside of the live lessons, we are giving every child a full timetable of learning, very much as if they were on site.

## **How long will each lesson last?**

On our virtual school timetable, you will see that no live lesson will last for more than 30 minutes. When the live lesson, or recorded lesson, ends this is not the end of the actual lesson. This is because children will be given independent learning activities to do as the second part of the lesson.

## **How is it best to use the timetable?**

The timetable enables children and parents and carers to see all the lessons that we are providing. Ideally, children will be able to attend every live lesson. However, we know that may not be possible because of the need to share devices at home. To help with the sharing of devices we are limiting our live lessons to a maximum of 30 minutes. Please use the timetable to enable children to attend at least one live lesson each day. To do this, you may want to talk to your children and mark on the timetable which will be their live lessons and which ones will be their recorded lessons.



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## **Why are we having the St Osyth Virtual School instead of just emailing home remote learning?**

The St Osyth Virtual School is going to provide your child with better learning and better well being than would be possible by just emailing home remote learning tasks.

1. It provides all children with a clear structure and routine.
2. Children will be able to interact, live, with their teachers, support staff and each other – using MS Teams.
3. Teachers, and support staff, will be able to assess children's learning during the live sessions.
4. Teachers, and support staff, will be able to assess children's learning through the tasks completed on Purple Mash.
5. Children will get timely feedback on their learning, through live lessons and through Purple Mash.
6. Children with specific needs can be better supported.
7. Children will be able to learn with greater independence – better for them and better for parents and carers.
8. The use of YouTube for PE lessons and video messages is an effective way to engage children and to help them access PE and to see the senior leaders of their school.

## **How has the school decided about how to run St Osyth Virtual School?**

We have learnt from our experiences from last time – applying what worked well and identifying what we can do better. To take two examples:

1. We know that the PE lessons worked very well last time, thank you Mr C, so we are having them again – but even better.
2. We know that, last time, some children and families struggled to have routines that supported good learning. The timetable, live lessons and our 'Get Ready' supports children and parents to deal with this matter.

We have also invested time, money and training, in technology.

## **What is our 'Get Ready'**

Our **Get Ready is a mnemonic that supports children through what they need to do to engage well in our virtual school.** Parents and carers may also want to help their children Get Ready for virtual school by giving children rewards for each step of Get Ready or when all steps have been completed. Such rewards can be simple ones, such as smiley faces or larger ones – for example, children having the food of their choice on a Friday evening if they have completed 'Get Ready' for all five days in the week.

## **Which lessons do children have to attend?**

**Children must attend at least one live lesson each day.** This is important for children feeling involved with the lessons and seeing their teachers and friends. It is also important because it is a key way for teachers to see how well the children are learning, if they need extra support or challenge and for them to give children feedback on their learning.

## **How can I help my child as they attend St Osyth Virtual School?**

School staff will be providing great lessons and learning activities. Children, however, will only learn well by attending the lessons and doing the activities they are given. They need help with both of these parts of virtual schooling. Our 'St Osyth Virtual School learning rules' provides information about how to do this. Children are used to us having rules when they physically attend school. Please help your children understand the rules of virtual school. Thank you.

## **What happens if there are problems with technology?**

Almost certainly there will be problems with technology – at home and in school. If this happens, we will persevere until we can find the best possible solutions. Virtual school is new to all of us – children, parents/carers and staff. It will be nothing short of a miracle if the technology that all staff and children will be using always works perfectly.

If you have specific issues, such as logging in, or finding a particular learning activity in Purple Mash, then please email your child's teacher. See our 'Communication Protocol During School Closure' document.

We will be introducing drop off/pick up boxes for those children that have lots of problems accessing the online learning. These boxes will have paper copies of the learning tasks. More information about these will be provided next week.

**How will children, on site, access our St Osyth Virtual School?**

These children will physically attend the lesson as it takes place, live. They may also join the lesson online. Once the live element of the lesson has finished, they will complete the learning activity in the same way that children will at home.

**Who decides if the children can be seen and talk?**

Parents and carers decide if they want their child to use the camera function or not, in live lessons. Live lessons work much better if children and teachers can see each other and children can see each other. It is also better for their well-being for this to happen. Nevertheless, we do understand that a few families may rather not use the camera function.

Those children in school may use the camera function but only if we have had photograph/media permission from parents and carers.

**How will St Osyth Virtual School be monitored and evaluated?**

We have systems in place to monitor and evaluate our virtual school, in a similar way to our usual school. In the same way that we ask parents and carers for feedback about our usual school, we will also be asking children and parents/carers for feedback about our virtual school.

**What next?**

**This weekend, please ensure that your child has logged onto MS Teams and to Purple Mash.** Please email your child's teacher if there is a problem with this – they will not reply during the weekend but they will know, on Monday, to action the right support.

Our first ever video messages have been well received. As a result of the positive feedback we have had, we will be producing more video messages, as time goes by. Some will be for parents and carers whilst others will be for the children.

Below, are the FAQs that I provided in my last letter to you – in case you want them all the ones needed for next week in one place. Some of the FAQs have been updated.

My thanks to every member of the staff team. They have worked very hard all week to provide remote learning for this week, to prepare lessons, learning activities and to rapidly get to know the technology we will be using from Monday.

I am not aware of another local primary school, other than our partner school, which is aiming to provide such a comprehensive virtual school from next week.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Carter-Tufnell  
(Headteacher)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How will children access the live lessons?**

We are giving every child in school their own Microsoft (MS) Teams account. When they log in to their MS Teams account they will see invites to their lessons.

### **How will the school support children that may not be able to attend all the live lessons?**

If children can not attend a live lesson, for example, if they are sharing a single device with siblings, then they can access the lesson later – we are recording all our live lessons. Like for live lessons, recorded ones are accessed through MS Teams.

### **My child has not used MS Teams before so how will they/I know what to do?**

We have sent home two guides. One is about how to access MS Teams and is about how to access live lessons.

### **When will I get the log on details for MS Teams?**

These will have been sent home by the end of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Why are we using MS Teams for live and recorded lessons?**

MS Teams is a safe and secure environment for the children. It also works well with the other systems that we have in school.

### **How long will the lessons last?**

Lessons on MS Teams will last 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the age of the children and what they are being taught. In most MS Teams lessons, children will then be given activities to do before their next lesson.

### **How will the children access any written work/activities set in the live and recorded lessons?**

This will be via Purple Mash. Purple Mash is a very child-friendly online learning platform. It has learning activities that children can do and it enables:

1. Staff to upload work for children to complete.
2. Children to complete worksheets etc online.
3. Children to return their completed work to staff.
4. Staff to provide children with feedback on their work.

Again, we will make sure that children have the details to log on to their account and we will send home guidance about how to use Purple Mash – some of this guidance will be links to video guides.

### **How will the school support families that have no access to the internet or that have no devices on which to access the internet?**

We are exploring different options on how best to support families in these situations. Next week, we expect to be able to share details with families about this matter. We are not promising we can solve all internet and device challenges that some families may have. We want to but we do not have a bottomless budget... The DfE have not yet opened the portal for primary schools to order devices which can then be loaned to families.