Dear Parents and Carers,

**Re: Class Padlets**

I write to further clarify our approach with Padlet but before I go any further, can I take a moment to celebrate our school community and the way we have all responded to the many challenges that have come our way these last weeks. My compliments to the staff, who have their own families to look after and keep safe, who may have their own children to home school and are providing their classes with high quality learning material, experiences and effective lines of communication; to the parents, who have their own jobs to do from home and yet are still managing to support their children with their learning so well on a daily basis; to the pupils, who have had to adapt to some really unusual circumstances and yet have managed to become tech savvy enough to maintain their learning, friendships and enthusiasm through digital means. We are all to be commended and above all, assured that no matter what we’re doing, we’re doing our best and that is all that anyone can ask of us right now.

As our ‘Phase 2’ approach to the home learning beds down, I want here to provide you with further clarity about our use of ‘Padlet.’ By and large this seems to have been met with enthusiasm. The quality of the work children are sharing is impressive and often finds them utilising ICT skills in a way they may have never done before. Sharing work online has some significant benefits – for those posting work, the opportunities for peer feedback and teacher feedback; for those seeing the posts, ideas and inspiration for their own work. In this sense Padlet would seem a good compliment to the school’s other less public means of sharing achievements through the use of the new class email accounts.

For some, Padlet may have ‘passed you by’ in the deluge of content sent your way in the past few weeks. Padlet is a user-friendly application to create an online bulletin board that you can use to display information for any topic. You can add files, images, links and videos to your posts and can return to add more at any time. Padlet allows us to moderate posts so that all contributions can be approved before they are seen.

There are a few points about its usage that I would like to clarify:-

1. Padlet is an *option* that the school has provided for the children but parents have the right to approach home learning in any way that works best for them. There is no obligation to use the padlet. Everyone has different circumstances and different approaches – we must therefore, in this instance, accept difference.
2. Given teachers are also balancing different circumstances, I am also going to ask parents to accept difference on our side of the fence. As a rule and for the sake of fairness, our normal aim would be for consistency but all of this is far from normal. Our teachers are working hard to make use of online technologies but many are, for example, still going into school to support children and whilst they are doing this, it is impossible for them to be present on Padlet. We will set a minimum expectation for teachers but beyond this, parents please have an understanding that there will be some variance in how much the teacher can engage in it.
3. Our minimum expectation will be that teachers check in with their Padlet to answer questions and approve posts at least once per day (once when in school and teaching, more if supporting learning from home). When a teacher is not present at the screen, comments may be turned off to ensure sufficient monitoring can take place. However, in older classes where the children are more used to Padlet, the teachers may judge that they can trust their pupils to be more responsible for their comments. However as we know, social media has all sorts of potential for misunderstanding and misjudged comments, so please can teachers and parents together keep a close eye that comments being made are of a positive and sensitive nature.
4. To help make Padlet manageable, from now on our Teaching Assistants will also be looking to engage with it where they can, answering questions and providing feedback.
5. Each class Padlet pages will have *as a minimum* a chat/home page where other Foundation Subject work can be uploaded to, a class English page and a class Maths page (3 in total). Some teachers may choose to separate work into further pages at their own digression and it is likely that class Padlets may vary in appearance from class to class whilst essentially offering the same facilities.
6. A few children have been keen to start up their own Padlet. We would rather these were not linked to the school one- simply because we need to draw carefully our lines of responsibility when it comes to moderating content. If your child is starting their own page, it goes without saying that it is important to follow the correct guidance on password protection, moderating posts, profanity filters etc. Please be careful that what your child is doing online is safe and secure.
7. One consideration at the other end of the engagement spectrum would be the amount of screen time children are logging throughout a weekday. Despite the recent rain, let us not forget the unique opportunity they have to be getting outside in the garden, cooking or engaging in craft activities.

It is hoped that with a mutual understanding of all this, it will serve to tap into Padlet’s potential as a learning platform without, at any point, putting members of our school community under any undue pressure. We all need to know where we stand with this so that we can continue to the work together for the benefit of the children.

Thank you for all your hard work and support.

Kind regards

Mr Ricketts