



22nd February 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

It is amazing to think that it is seven weeks since Christmas and here we are back to school after the half term holiday. Last half term was not without its very real challenges, nonetheless I was delighted and thankful for the ways in which you all embraced both the online home learning and the partial closure of school. There was some wonderful learning taking place both at school and at home and you should all be amazingly proud of yourselves and the way everyone embraced this new hybrid style of learning. But still, we cannot wait to have all of our pupils back in school soon.

Proposed plans for re-opening of schools

The Prime Minister is expected to make an announcement tonight at 7pm about schools reopening to **ALL** of our pupils rather than just those of Key Workers who we have in currently. It is our fervent hope that we can get all of our pupils back to school soon, but until his announcement we will not know how many pupils in which year groups can come back when. I ask that you are all patient and please wait until we have digested what is said tonight and then put in place our personalised school plans, this will require us to use the anticipated new and updated guidance which should follow his announcement. I will update you all as soon as possible.

Phone calls/contact with your child's class teacher

As always, please feel free to contact the office and ask a teacher to contact you if you need any further guidance with any online home learning.

SeeSaw

I am delighted to say that despite some initial teething problems we are finally there! All the Early Years staff are so excited to start sharing all of the children's work both in school at home with you – it is a really wonderful new opportunity and I look forward to seeing the amazing things you continue to all do at home to support school.

Facebook

Please just watch this space – whilst as with all these things it is taking longer than I had first wished for – I am certain that it will be worth the wait! I look forward to sharing the wonderful things all of the pupils do in school with all of you.

Technology/Computers/Wifi devices

A call out to all our families – if you need support or help with any electronic devices we still have more in school which we can loan out to you. There are a large number of Laptops, Wifi routers and free Wifi codes to support parents and their children who need access to technology. If your children are sharing one laptop between them or they are using a mobile

phone to access the online learning, then please contact school. We can loan any of these devices to you free of charge, please just ring the school office.

A huge personal thank you

One of our parents has been amazingly generous and given school a large number of reconditioned laptops for pupils to use both in and out of school. This is an amazingly generous offer and I really appreciate it, all of our pupils will benefit from this generosity.

Virtual Golden Book Assembly

The Golden Book Assemblies for last week have been uploaded to your child's Teams account. For the Reception and Nursery children yours have been uploaded to the school website. So everyone, please remember to keep sending in examples of amazing work to school so that I can share and celebrate with you. For clarity, parents have asked me to praise by name, every child, every week, unfortunately whilst I know you all are doing amazing things it is not practicable to do this with 472 pupils on role, so I have asked teachers to nominate 2 children per class per week for individual praise, however I know of course that you are all doing wonderful things.

Mental Health and well-being

There is a link to a website here: <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/>

The theme was '**Express Yourself**' and there were some activity ideas for children on the website, it is supportive resource to help you at home. The assembly slides, are on Teams for you to access. We continue to believe that all of your children are capable of amazing things and we encourage everyone, parents and pupils to express themselves individually.

Well-being Wednesday

We have become increasingly concerned that pupils and parents are really struggling both academically and emotionally with the amount of work set out in the government expectation of at least 4 hours online learning per day per child of work. As such we have decided that for the next 6 weeks we would like you all, both pupils in school and those at home to take part in **Well-being Wednesday**. The plan would follow like this:

- Start the day with Collective worship (PPT slides are on the school website and staff will make sure that they are uploaded via Teams and SeeSaw for you to use)
- RE Lesson (Work provided by school)
- Enrichment Art Activity (Colouring, painting, collaging – making something, making models in the garden using leaves, twigs and natural items) This should be a fun activity that will not be marked, it is aimed at letting our children benefit from expressing themselves through art/music. Teachers will add suggestions to their planning for you.
- No Screen time afternoon – this is where we want you and your children to be creative – please feel free to turn the computer off and do something different for example:
 - Bake / cook some food
 - Play with lego / games from Christmas etc
 - Create a project / learn about something you are interested in
 - Play board games and/or card games
 - Go outside and enjoy the weather in your garden or if able go for a walk
 - Play with your football/tennis racket in the garden
 - Make music: learn a musical rhythm or a song

- Read a book for the single pleasure of enjoying a wonderful story
- Chat to friends/family on the telephone (with parental permission)
- Write a grandparent (family member) a letter to tell them you love them
- Finally, please go and do something you love and have some fun!

I certainly hope that this pause for the next six Wednesday's will offer families some well needed respite from the challenges of Home School learning. It is also our hope and wish that if our pupils feel more emotionally secure then they will be able to feel more confident when asked to complete the academic work put in front of them each day. Happy children are more secure in their academic learning.

Catch up plans

For your information, school is currently actively working with national partners to ensure that we have a large and exceptionally broad and balanced provision in place to support your children as they come back into school. There will be a focus on the inevitable academic catch up needed by every pupil in our care but we will also be placing great emphasis on ensuring that our pupils are supported emotionally and physically through well-being programs and sporting activities. There will be lots more details to come out in the following weeks and months.

And finally, whilst time has flown by I think we should all be proud of how much we have all accomplished and how far we have all come together since the third national lockdown was announced on Monday 4th Jan at 8pm. Thank you for all the support and good wishes, we really appreciate them. The positive feedback continues to boost staff and pupils alike.

I continue to keep you and all of your families in my thoughts and prayers during this challenging time, and I look forward to welcoming back every pupil into school as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

Best wishes,

A D Thorpe

Mrs A. D. Thorpe
Head teacher