

Dear Parents,

Thank you for all of your continuing hard work in supporting your children at home. There is hardly a week without another significant announcement about schools. I can imagine that, just as for myself and the staff, it has caused great disappointment and concern, (if not surprise), to hear that the restrictions on schools cannot be relaxed to enable more children to return to school before September.

We have 37% of the school population currently back in school in comparison with a national figure of 11% . Only 52% schools nationally re-opened on the first of June and we opened five days each week in contrast with many schools on the first day possible. Of the twenty -six schools in our school catering district our number of meals provided is the highest, (by a significant margin) of all the twenty six schools, another indicator that we have a comparatively very high proportion of our children back in school.

Virtual PTA meeting and Feedback

It was great to see so many of you on Monday evening along with some Governors and Staff and have the opportunity to explain how we are organising the school. I was able to explain in detail how we are managing the restrictions, using all the available staff and space for our seven new class groups, while also trying to support **all** of our children who are at home during this half term. I hope that those of you who attended found the information I provided and the Q and A session helpful and that you were reassured by my continuing commitment to do our best in a very difficult situation. I hope that you have been able to share your increased understanding with other parents in your year groups.

Of course, I know that there is still a great deal of frustration and anxiety about the fact that the year one and two children are not able to be in school every day and that many of you are also finding it difficult to motivate the children. I completely understand and share your concerns and feel equally frustrated that we cannot bring all the children back to school at the moment due to the class size restrictions.

The Staff have adapted planning and created additional resources and material to respond to the feedback during the weeks since lockdown. There is a new weekly competition, reward certificates sent to individuals, and we are also providing individual feedback to work samples as they are uploaded to the Learning Platform or emailed to us. We are constantly planning ahead and thinking about the next stage as well as being ready to respond quickly yet effectively to the next Government announcement.

Motivation and Independence

In response to the feedback from parents the Senior Staff have started work immediately on developing some additional plans to support you and the children.

Next week Mrs Turi will be introducing an Independence initiative via video on the Learning Platform which we hope will help you in supporting the children at home to be less reliant on you in preparation for a return to school in September.

I will be providing a history focussed video assembly to inspire some research.

I will also be introducing our plan for the next five weeks in a newsletter on Wednesday in relation to:

- motivating the children to keep going and to support their writing in particular, (as that has been a key theme of parent communication).
- Facilitating the year two transition to year three.
- Facilitating the year one transition to year two.
- Providing Summer Holiday learning materials.
- Planned events before the end of the academic year.

In the meantime, please see the guidance below which I gave at the beginning of lockdown to support you managing the home learning. Remember, in particular, that you cannot recreate a six- hour school day nor should you be attempting to. We have thirty in a class whereas home learning is 1:1 or 1:2 and so you can do one to two hours in the morning or spread over the day with breaks and still achieve some great learning. Please remember that your talk with the children is when the best learning happens and that they also need frequent praise, reward and breaks to motivate them.

I need to emphasise again that all the teachers are currently teaching the Reception or Key worker classes in school each day, with the exception of Mrs Tynegate, Mrs Finch and Mrs Beal who are planning the lessons and preparing the resources from home, managing all the communications from parents and staff and also, as with all the teachers, still fulfilling the requirements on them for their wider professional responsibilities. However, we are determined to support the children at home and do our very best to alleviate the pressure on you. Thank -you for all of the recognition and support for the great work the teachers have been doing every day since March. Your positive feedback has been really appreciated.

Recommendations for home learning

In order to help you support your children we recommend the following

- Routine – try to establish a daily routine as this will help your child feel secure. It will also help enable them to realise that reading, writing, maths etc are part of every day
- Create a timetable with your child so they can know what is happening each day as far as possible. Each Year Team has provided guidance on this in the pack
- Praise and reward are crucial. These are stressful times but remember to praise your child for effort, independence, being helpful. Use the 6R vocabulary (responsibility, resilience, resourcefulness, reasoning, reflection and respect).
- Give your child responsibility – They love to feel grown up and that they are helping (and you will need them to be helpful and considerate!)

- Ensure you provide time for physical activity each day. If you cannot get outside or do not have easy access to a garden or park look at these resources: - e.g 'just dance', 'cosmic kids', 'go noodle', 'kidz bop kidz'
- Don't do everything for them – they are used to 'having a go' and need to learn to be increasingly independent. Instead guide them, encourage them, praise them, show them what they need to do.

Year 2

Transition

You will have heard from Mr Tucker and Mrs Searle from St Lawrence this week and heard that they are planning for the induction of the children who are going there for year three. I have been working closely with Mr Tucker and we will continue to work together to make the transition as smooth as possible for the children.

Song and Photograph

Miss McCarthy has uploaded the words for the year 2 song on the Learning Platform. The music will be uploaded by our technician early next week on the learning platform.

We are organising a photo memento also and will contact you next week with further details of what we need from you.

This week's winners

Year 2

Congratulations to

- Joey Murphy and Indie Watton who are year 2 Writers of the Week.
- Charlie Lucas and Eloise Scraase who are our making Challenge winners.

Year 1 Cooking and Literacy challenge

We had 24 entries this week! Well done year one children!

Congratulations to:

- William in Maple for fantastic video instructions and a taste review.
- Harry in Rowan who presented great instructions for making Rocky Road.
- Dylan in Willow for an amazing video to show how to make Spanish Omelette.

I am looking forward to sharing our more detailed plans with you next week.

Thank you for all you are doing at home and for your support. I hope you have an enjoyable and relaxing weekend.

With very best wishes,

Carol Rusby