



HIGH HESKET C of E SCHOOL (VC)

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Dear Parents,

I am delighted to say that we successfully welcomed back a group of our Year 1 pupils last Monday and a further group of Reception children joined us this morning. Whilst these are very strange circumstances for us all, it has been lovely to see the children's faces and hear laughter in the corridors again. There are still many obstacles linked to government group sizes and space but we feel we are moving forward safely towards a much wider return and look forward to the government relaxing restrictions once the science dictates that it is safe to do so. I know many of the children have been unable to return or parents feel that it is not yet the right time to do so, and I want to reassure you all that we will be doing everything we can to support all of our pupils to address the disruption to learning that the last few months has brought. Although there has been much speculation in the media, we still do not yet know exactly what provision will look like in September but will keep you updated with government announcements as they are released. In the meantime, we will continue to use our home learning materials up until the end of term as the basis of all learning in school for those returning year groups to ensure that there is consistency between learning at home and at school.

The government announced at the end of last week that they would be funding catch up provision for the next academic year for eligible pupils. We have not yet received any detail or information about these plans and who will be eligible but look forward to seeing what this enables us to put in place from September onwards when the funding is allocated to schools. Regardless of the government announcements, we are already looking at how we will need to support our pupils when they return to school next academic year. We are currently reviewing our curriculum to identify what will need to be put in place and will be ensuring we tailor our teaching to address gaps as well as to put in social and emotional wellbeing support for the children.

Tapestry

We are continuing to use Tapestry to share messages and information from staff to their classes and we are really enjoying seeing the photographs and work from our children and their families. It is a great way to share how the children are getting on with the home learning tasks and staff endeavour to feedback and comment whenever possible. The emailed links to set up a login do expire after a certain amount of time so please feel free to get in touch if you would like these reactivated or if you need any help with how it works. Selecting 'add an observation' will take you through the process of uploading to Tapestry and anything you share from home will only be visible to the staff.

Lost Property

Due to the abrupt timing of the school closures, many of the children left behind items at school. Whilst we are more than happy to hold on to these in school, a few families have been in contact to see if they can collect items that they need for use at home. If you would like to arrange collection of any urgent items, please email the office and we will see what we can do to accommodate this although it may not be possible in all cases.

Mrs Pugh's retirement

Mrs Pugh, our Special Educational Needs Coordinator, has announced her intention to retire at the end of this term. She has worked at the school for several years, supporting staff, pupils and parents and we are incredibly grateful to her for her hugely valuable contributions to the school. She will be greatly missed but we all wish her all the very best for her new adventures. Miss Jenny Blenkarn, our Year 2 teacher, will be taking over the role of SENCO from September 2020. Miss Blenkarn has completed the National Award for SEN Coordination and has worked closely with Mrs Pugh over the years which will enable a smooth transition into the role. To meet the requirements of the role, Miss Blenkarn will require some release time from her role as class teacher and this will be covered by existing staff to maintain consistency for the children and further information about this will be passed on to parents once we have a better idea of how September will be organised.

Library Service's Summer Reading Challenge

Every year, the Library Service run a fantastic reading challenge for over the summer holidays. This year, the Library Service have decided to start the challenge earlier than normal and launched the 'Silly Squad' theme last Monday 15th June with it running through until September. It is aimed at children between 4-11 years old and there is lots of digital content, online games and quizzes and downloadable activities. The challenge website can be found at www.sillysquad.org.uk.

Reading books

The Oxford Owl website has a really useful selection of eBooks which can be read for free at <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/books/free-ebooks/>. For those parents wishing to support their child's reading at home, these can be used to complement the Read, Write Inc program that we use in school in EYFS and Key Stage 1. Although you can access RWI books on the site, we would prefer that these are saved for use in school when we return. However, there are several other schemes that can be accessed on the website and there is a short quiz you can complete to see what stage would be most suitable for your child. This can be found at <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/which-reading-level-stage/>.

For those children who are now on Accelerated Reader, a huge number of fiction and non-fiction books can be quizzed on. To find out the ZPD of a book, or to search for books within a ZPD range, visit www.arbookfind.co.uk. If the book is not found on the website, it is not yet included as part of Accelerated Reader.

Sun safety

We have been pleasantly surprised by the beautiful weather we have had recently and, despite the odd thunderstorm, this has really helped to facilitate a smooth return for those children back in school as we are trying to maximise the use of the outdoors. However, our increased use of outdoor space does mean that the children need to be prepared for all eventualities in terms of the weather if they are attending school. Children should bring a waterproof coat and, on sunny days, should also come to school already wearing a long lasting and high protection factor sun screen. It is also advisable that children bring a sun hat which they are welcome to leave at school throughout the week. If your child has specific sensitivities to the sun, feel free to speak to a member of staff about extra precautions.

Lunch in school

For those children attending Key Worker or year group provision in school, we have only been able to offer the option of a packed lunch for those who wish to have lunch provided by the school. The practicalities of the current situation have meant that we have not been able to make a full return to hot school dinners just yet, however the kitchen staff are hoping to begin introducing some hot items within the packed lunches on certain days from this week (sausages in a bun, folded pizza slices etc) to try and add some greater variety of items.

Zoom sessions

I mentioned in a previous newsletter that the staff are preparing for a second round of whole class Zoom sessions and these are currently being organised as we speak. Year 6 have already participated this week in a transition themed session and it was lovely to reconnect with them over the screen. Reception and Year 1 are currently on site so their second session will be organised for later on in the term. Class teachers will be in touch to provide dates for the next set of class sessions but please be mindful that staff are currently working in school supporting our 'bubbles' and so will need to factor this in when preparing dates. As a result, sessions for the different classes may be staggered over the next few weeks rather than across a couple of days as we did previously.

July office hours

You may remember that Mrs McCullough was due to undergo a routine procedure in March and was expected to be absent for a period of time. Due to COVID-19, the procedure was postponed and has now been rescheduled for the end of term. As a result, Mrs McCullough will not be available in the office from Wednesday 1st July onwards. I will be monitoring the emails and answer phone throughout the day but, because of the current organisation of the school and use of 'bubbles', there may not be a member of staff available to answer the phone. We would appreciate it if communication with school could be done primarily through email and we are happy to return any requests for a phone call which are submitted by email. If you require any help from Mrs McCullough, it would be wise to get in touch prior to the 1st July. We are still utilising Schoolmoney and so, if anyone needs their password updating to be able to pay any previously outstanding amounts or for current fees such as school lunches, please feel free to do so.

End of year reports

We are in the process of finalising end of year reports for the children and these will be emailed out to you as soon as they are ready.

Transition to new year groups

This is the time of year when we would normally have our 'change over' days where classes spend the day with next year's teacher to familiarise themselves ready for the next academic year. Sadly, it will be impossible for us to prepare transition this year as we would do normally but we do still think it is important to consider transition in some way. We do not yet know the government's plans for September but we have already announced that the class teachers will be remaining in their current year groups and the majority of classrooms will also stay assigned to the year groups they have now. The only change will be the Year 3 (Miss Little) and Year 4 (Mr Andrews) classrooms where, should classrooms return to normal, the rooms will be swapped over. This will mean that the current Year 3 cohort will keep the same classroom in September when they return as Year 4 with Mr Andrews.

To assist with transition, the next Zoom session will be led jointly by the children's current class teacher and the teacher they will have next year. The home learning materials for the end of term will also contain some transition activities and next year's class teachers will be in touch to introduce themselves to the children in a letter or Tapestry message. Miss Rennie and Miss Carruthers will also be in touch with those pupils joining Reception and Nursery in September, to discuss possible arrangements and key information.

I hope our families remain safe and well and, as always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs A Harvey
Headteacher