

September 4th 2020



Dear Parents,

It has been so wonderful to see all our children back in school and great to see so many of you too. The Heads of School have been working together with staff to ensure we maximise the C-19 safety arrangements and things have worked really well overall. The biggest problem has been not enough sinks and taps for all the regular 20 second hand-washing needed for all children and staff!! Our children have settled into the routines well and all our new Reception children have had a seamless transition; marvellous!

Your support over the summer months with your child's education has been greatly appreciated and it is clear that the time you have spent with your children has paid dividends; they have come back to us ready to pick up where they left off, requesting daily maths and English lessons 'like normal.' We are structuring our days to give a broad, balanced curriculum but are maintaining flexibility depending on their needs each day. It is vital that they are given the time to re-adjust and settle back to learning with a whole class of other children and remembering how learning together works in school.

The Curriculum

Teachers will send out an overview of the intended learning for this term, which is strongly built around PHSE (Personal Health and Social Education). Children will rediscover personal and school values; they will re-establish old and new friendships; and they will rediscover themselves as learners in school, articulating how and why we do things as it is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

We will not 'drop' whole subjects. Our curriculum offer will remain broad. We will be teaching current year group content most of the time. The balance and weighting of subjects may well need autumn and spring term adjustment to ensure that key basic knowledge and skills are taught, re-visited, and remembered. **Phonics and reading will be given additional teaching time and prioritised.**

We will work tirelessly and quickly to establish what learning has been **missed** (because it was not taught), what learning has been **forgotten** or is not secure (because it was not embedded in long term memory prior to March) and what learning is **rusty** (pupils are out of practice but fluency returns quickly). Your child will not be subjected to hundreds of different tests to ascertain this information.

Further information will be available via our school website in due course.

Homework

When the class teacher believes your child is ready, homework will re-start. The children need a good schoolwork-life balance and I suspect they will be feeling more mentally and physically tired as the week's progress. Feel free to message the teacher if you wish to discuss this further.

*I have to face life with a newly found passion.
I must rediscover the irresistible will to learn,
to live and to love.*

Andrea Bocelli

Reading Books

Due to the need to minimise transference of books and equipment between home and school, we will trial the following:

- For early readers, two books will be sent home which on return will be cleaned and

stored for 72 hours. They will be given another two.

- Older readers will be able to change their books on a Monday or Thursday as we recognise that they may longer novels and will need more time to read them. Please do not request books on other days, as we do not have the quantity of books nor the staff to manage the distribution/quarantining process more widely.
- If more books are needed, please refer to the many free on-line links we have informed you of already.
- We will trial the use of Seesaw for recording and reporting on reading progress to you rather than the use of a reading record book or diary. Please use the system that the class teacher sets up to communicate to them the reading your child experiences at home.

Communication

The use of Seesaw has worked really effectively during the past months and is something that should continue as a two-way process in supporting your children, so please do use this method to liaise with the teacher in the first instance. If, however, you need to speak personally over the phone to the teacher, Head of School, SENCo or me, then simply call the office to arrange a mutually convenient time. I am so sorry that you aren't able to pop in and chat like 'normal' but I'm sure you can understand the reasons why.

We will continue to drip-feed relevant information from us, the Local Authority and DFE via this method; I hope this has been beneficial to you.

Parents Evenings

We are planning to hold these virtually with you during the week commencing 12th October. Further details will be sent later in the term, but I wanted to reassure you that you will have the opportunity to touch base with the class teacher at some point.

Further lockdown

I dread the thought that this might happen, but if it affects our school (either a bubble or the whole school) we will have a programme of remote learning ready. We will build on what we started in the summer term and extend the use of Microsoft Teams and other platforms to support learning from home. This is all in hand and we will inform you of any plans when necessary. In the meantime, **it is VITAL that you let us know if your child has struggled to access the use of a computer or laptop either because you don't have one or because you have needed what you do have for your own work.** The government have released funding for schools to purchase laptops for those children whose parents are in receipt of low-income benefits so we must take advantage of this as soon as possible; we will then be able to loan school laptops we currently have to others. Knowing how many we will need is very important so that we can be fully prepared; please email the school office urgently if this applies to you.

Collective Worship

We will continue to hold whole school assemblies via Teams/ Zoom, including regular sessions led by members of our church representatives from across the 4 schools.



This has been an innovative form of collaboration and I am thrilled it will continue. This term our Open The Book team will be zooming in too! We are thinking about how to incorporate our harvest festival in this virtual world and so look out for further information in the coming weeks.

Wishing you good health and a happy term.
Best wishes,

Mrs J V Hopkins
Executive Head teacher