



Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are all well. I am pleased to be able to say that the first week back with more children went smoothly and the children were a credit to the school and their parents. They coped brilliantly with the new set ups in the classrooms and the new routines. The PRIDE code was evident wherever I looked.

As you can imagine, it can be a challenge to be transparent with you all about our long term plans when the Government changes the guidance and expectations at short notice.

Last week Gavin Williamson, The Secretary of State for Education made the following statement:

We continue to follow the best scientific advice and believe that this cautious, phased return is the most sensible course of action to take. While we are not able to welcome all primary children back for a full month before the summer, we continue to work with the sector on the next steps, where we would like schools that have the capacity to bring back more children—in those smaller class sizes—to do so if they are able to before the summer holidays.

Unfortunately, like many schools, we knew from the very beginning that it would be an impossible task to welcome back all children until the medical advice on social distancing is changed. I have done my best to be honest with you from the start about the challenges that these new regulations have created. We already have eight bubbles for children in the FS, Y1 and Y6 and four bubbles for the Key Worker/Vulnerable children. This has meant that we have already used most classrooms in the school and most teachers have been assigned to a bubble.

Before half term we already had requests from Key Worker parents who wanted to delay their child starting back with us until mid-June. In the last week alone we have received a further eleven requests from parents who believe they are Key Workers so it is likely that we will have to increase the number of Key Worker bubbles from the week beginning 22 June 2020.

At this stage, I think that it is likely that we will then be full and will not be able to admit any other children. As you know, we have been asked by the Government to fill Key Worker/Vulnerable first, then FS, then Y1 and finally Y6. I wonder whether this will mean that some of the Y6 children who are currently with us will find that they no longer have a bubble. I know that some schools are having to consider a week-on, week-off model but the Government discouraged this.

The guidance we are given refers to **CRITICAL** Key Worker Roles and that **where people can work from home, they should**. I would ask parents to consider this before asking for a place at the school.

I shall reserve making a final decision until the Department for Education make their announcement, which I believe will be at some point this week. Only then will I write to let you know what is happening next. I am sorry if this makes it difficult for you to make plans, but we must wait to hear what the Government advises.

Simon Eardley
Headteacher

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Assemblies

Last Monday, Mr Marks and I held our first Zoom assembly to welcome the children back. Although it felt strange that the children were not in the hall, it was lovely to see them on a screen. Thankfully, like many people, Mr Marks and I have had lots of practice on Zoom so it all went smoothly.

It was great to see so many of the children but it reminded us that there are many children who are still at home and some that we will not see until September. We have decided that we will film a message each week for the children at home and the first one will go live later today. Mr Marks and I will alternate which one of us leads the assembly in school and who creates the message for those at home. I am the star of today's film for those at home!

Reports

Teachers have completed the end of year reports and Mr Marks and I will now read them and add our own comments.

At this point, we think that reports will be sent home electronically but we need to work out how we can do this efficiently.

Reports will be shared on **MONDAY 6 JULY**, the date that was originally set in the planner.

Keeping in Touch

A few weeks ago all the teachers rang the children in their class to say hello as we had been on lockdown for a long time. All the teachers said how lovely it was to speak to the children and over the next two weeks the teachers are going to get in touch again with the children currently not in school.

For the younger children in the school, their teacher will ring home again. For some of the older children, their class teacher may arrange a different way to 'keep in touch.' For example, they may organise a whole class Google 'meet' session where all the children in that class can join an online session to say hello and maybe listen to a story, read live by their teacher. Year Six have started doing this last week, reading part of a story each day. If your child's class teacher arranges one of these online sessions but your child can't join or you choose for them not to join, their teacher will ring home instead at a different time.

It is important that we keep ourselves safe when working or communicating online so we have some rules that **MUST** be followed if you join an online session with a teacher and other pupils:

- An adult must be in the room when you're on the call.
- Your child should be in a communal room in your house e.g. the lounge or the kitchen (not their bedroom).
- Make sure they are dressed appropriately.
- Make sure you're on mute when you enter the call.
- If using Google Meet, when you click the link it will ask you for your name before being let into the meeting. Please type in a name that the teacher will recognise so they know who they are letting into the meeting.
- Your camera must be turned on when you start the session so the teacher can see who is joining.

Although we have used this technology for staff meetings and keeping in touch with colleagues, it is still a new way of working and so we may experience some technical difficulties! Please be patient and not disheartened if it doesn't work. Your child's class teacher will still get in touch another way and we will apply a growth mind set, learn from our mistakes and try again!

Home Learning

Instead of writing a separate letter on a Friday with information about home learning opportunities, we will include some information in the weekly newsletter.

At the start of the lockdown there were a number of companies and educational websites that made their resources available for free and we quickly added many of these to our school website or have used them as part of the home learning package we put together for each year group. Not surprisingly, over time, the number of new resources we became aware of slowed and we haven't added a lot of content to the school website over the past few weeks.

However, the links on the home learning website cover many areas of the curriculum and offer something a little alternative for our pupils. The priority is for the children to keep up with the tasks set by their teachers each week. If you want to encourage them to do a little extra or they are keen to discover some new things by themselves, the links on the Home Learning page will help you to achieve this.

The page is organised into sections; maths, English (phonics, reading and GPS), mindfulness and keeping active, other curriculum areas.

This is the link: <https://www.owps.org.uk/page/?title=Home+Learning&pid=197>

New Classes

Last week we completed the final checks and have fourteen brand new and sparkling classes for September.

We are still looking at how we can announce to each child which class they will be in but what we have decided is that this will be done on **WEDNESDAY 1 JULY**, the day that was originally set on the planer.