

# Seghill First School Newsletter January 2021 edition 2

## We're back to normal-ish!

Thank you to everyone for your patience over the last couple of weeks. A water leak and no heating is never good at the best of times, so it was a very difficult start to the new year and the new term. Temperatures were "bracing" in school to say the least.

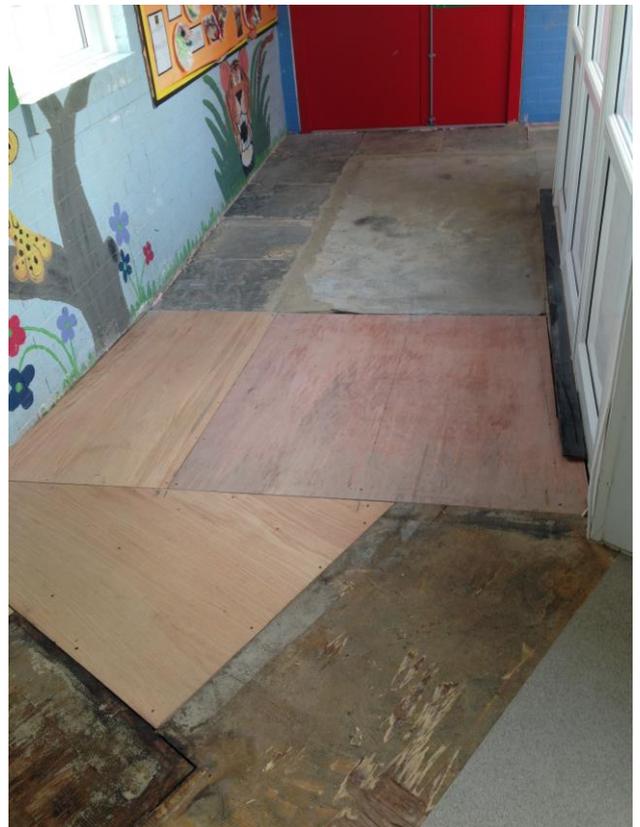
Mr Ruler and contractors worked all weekend to try to get everything sorted out. Following a number of setbacks, the system was finally filled and pressurised last Tuesday, meaning we could open to pupils last Wednesday.

There was a huge amount of work to be done to repair the corridors next to the bottom yard door, but this is almost complete. We are lucky to have a number of outdoor spaces that the children can still access without using the bottom yard.

Hopefully when the repairs are complete we can return to normal, or as normal as things can be at the moment.



While the work was being done.



Just waiting for the new flooring.

## Welcome to our school

We are delighted to welcome three new Nursery starters to our Early Years Unit. They are **Luciana, Edison** and **Harry**. All three have settled very quickly, especially in the current climate.

**Joey** will be joining our Year 2 class, so we are really looking forward to getting to know him and his family.

We are also delighted to welcome back **Johnny** into Year 3. Johnny has very quickly rekindled old friendships and picked up our routines with no fuss at all.

## #TeamSeghill

I'd like to say some thank yous. During the current lockdown our **teachers** have done an amazing job to adapt the curriculum we planned for teaching all pupils in all year groups to accommodate both face to face teaching and remote learning. THANK YOU- you are doing a fantastic job.

There is a substantial group of staff, in addition to our fabulous teachers, keeping school open and running. So, here's a big 'THANK YOU' to all our amazing **non-teaching staff**, as well as our **students** currently on placement in our school. We could not manage without you all.

I'd also like to extend my thanks to our **School Governors**, who continue to support us through these difficult times.

Thank you to the children who are **attending school**. You have all done really well adapting to another new way of working. You are doing a great job. And well done to children who are working very hard at home on their **remote learning**. We would love to have all of you back in school, but until we can, please keep busy with your school work and try to do as much as you can as often as you can. Take breaks and just aim to do a bit at a time.

Finally, well done to all of the **parents and grandparents who are supporting their child with remote learning**. There isn't a single member of staff who thinks your job is easy. Well done if you have managed to get into a routine. This helps! If you are struggling, please ask for help. We can see that some children have not even logged into their Google Classroom or Tapestry yet. This lockdown will undoubtedly have an impact on everyone, but some children are going to fall further behind than their peers if they do not engage with any sort of remote learning. Please see the section on the next page on remote learning for more information.

## Birthdays

Our birthday boys and girls in the second, third and fourth weeks in January are-

- Isaac and Tio-Kirk age 5 in Yellow class;
- Willow age 8 and Evie age 9 in Blue class.



Happy birthday to you all. We hope your birthday is special and fun.

## Star of the week

Our stars of the week for the last two weeks are-

- **Mrs Bell's star** Nieve and Stephanie;
- **Mrs Lyons' and Mrs Watson's star** Henry and William CH;
- **Mrs Knowles' star** Frankie L and Roman;
- **Mrs Kembrey's star** Emily M and Parker;
- **Mrs Askew's star** Frankie R and Charlie;
- **Miss Chappell's star** Jay

Well done, stars. Stars are being chosen from children who are working at home and children who are working at school. Who will it be next week?



## Huggg vouchers for children entitled to Free School meals

We are continuing to provide Huggg **supermarket vouchers** to parents of children who are eligible for **Free School Meals**. This is completely different to Universal Infant Free School Meals. Vouchers are sent out weekly via text.

### Remote learning

Remote learning is being provided via Tapestry for children in Orange and Yellow class and via Google Classroom for children in Red, Green and Blue class. Thank you to the teachers who have done a remarkable job in adapting their plans from whole class face to face teaching to remote learning so quickly.

As schools will be closed until at least February half term for many pupils, it is really important that children engage with the remote learning provided by their teachers.

Thank you to everyone who has already logged on and started to complete the tasks they have been given. Class teachers can be contacted directly with queries regarding remote learning using their email addresses-  
[anna.bell1@school360.co.uk](mailto:anna.bell1@school360.co.uk) [amanda.lyons@school360.co.uk](mailto:amanda.lyons@school360.co.uk)  
[sarah.watson1@school360.co.uk](mailto:sarah.watson1@school360.co.uk) [pamela.knowles@school360.co.uk](mailto:pamela.knowles@school360.co.uk)  
[sarah.kembrey@school360.co.uk](mailto:sarah.kembrey@school360.co.uk) [hannah.askew@school360.co.uk](mailto:hannah.askew@school360.co.uk)

We can see who has logged into Google Classroom or Tapestry and who hasn't. We will be following this up with phone calls this week.

### Availability of places in school

We currently have approximately one third of our pupils in school, with the rest of the children being offered remote learning.

The longevity of our offer in school is highly dependent on staff well-being and safety – we simply can't run the school without staff staying fit and well. We are therefore prioritising staff safety and strictly limiting class numbers. **Both groups in school are currently full.**

### Covid-19 update

It looks likely that school staff will start to receive **weekly Covid tests** in the near future. This will no doubt provide us with some asymptomatic positive test results and may well impact on what we can offer in terms of face to face teaching in school.

Given the prevalence of the virus in England, it is highly likely that we will have to **send home a whole class group**, rather than small groups of children, in the event of a **positive test result**.

It is therefore worth having a **Plan B** for child care available to you, just in case we need to send your child home to isolate for a number of days or if we have to close your child's group. Hopefully this won't happen but it's always good to have a backup plan, particularly as any changes we are required to make are likely to be at short notice.

### Devices from the DfE

You may have read in the media that the DfE is providing **laptops and tablets** to schools to help children and families in need to access remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19). Devices have been made available for disadvantaged children in certain year groups who:

- are affected by disruption to face-to-face education at their school
- have been advised to shield because they are clinically extremely vulnerable.

We have been informed that our school is eligible for **10 devices**. Each school's allocation is based on the number of children in the school, free school meals data and an estimate of the number of devices a school already has. Please note that these devices are loaned out to families and must be returned to school at the end of the loan period.

We received our 10 laptops this week along with loan agreements. They will be set up by our ICT support team on Monday, ready for collection. Sharing 10 laptops between 43 children was never going to be an easy task. We have prioritised children who are working from home (rather than those who are at school) and families who have said that they do not have access to a device. If you have been allocated a laptop, we will contact you next week. Laptops can be collected from school by appointment and loan agreements must be signed before the laptop can be taken home.

### Extra laptops

In addition to the 10 laptops we have been allocated by the DfE, we are going to buy **6 more laptops**. These have been funded through donations from **within our school and our community** and our school budget. I will provide details of these donations in the next newsletter.

### Food bank at Seghill Community Centre

The **Community Food Pantry** has set up a drop in **food bank** in conjunction with **Fareshare** where families can call in and get a bag of fresh produce to top up their supplies. This takes place every **Wednesday between 11:30am and 12:30pm at Seghill Community Centre**. It is open to all families, not just those eligible for Free School Meals.

If they receive donations, they can put together hampers to help families. If you would like to make a donation, please go to the Community Centre on Wednesday to find out more.

### Let us know what you have been doing at home

Class teachers have passed on some fabulous pictures and clips of what you have been doing at home. Please **send in a picture** to let us know what you have been doing. This includes school work and anything else you have been getting up to.

Please send pictures to the **admin email address** and I will post as many as I can on the **school Facebook page**. I will assume that if you send the picture to school you are giving consent for it to be posted on our Facebook page. If this is not the case, please state this clearly in your email.

[admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk)

### Google meets for children with class teachers

We are all trying to get used to working even more in the virtual world. Teachers are setting up **virtual meetings** with the children in their class, which is a great way to get all of the children together whether they are at school or home.

Please look out for emails and messages on the Google Classroom which will contain **joining instructions**.

We hope that this will become a regular thing for the children and provide them with a chance to see their friends, even if it is only in the virtual world.

### When will school reopen to all pupils?

The short answer is "I don't know". As a headteacher, I find out what is happening at exactly the same time as you and the rest of the country. I tuned into the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 04 January at 8:00pm to hear that schools were closing with immediate effect to all pupils except specific groups at exactly the same time as you. We have no advance notice of decisions.

I have heard from some sources that schools will be given two weeks' notice of them reopening. At least one union that represents headteachers is certainly lobbying the government for this.

All I can say is that as soon as we know anything new, we will let you know straight away. Please keep an eye on our school **Facebook page**, the **school website** and **School Gateway** for news and information-

<https://www.facebook.com/seghillschool>

<http://www.seghill.northumberland.sch.uk/website>

If you download the **School Gateway app** we don't pay for the message we send you.