

Highworth Combined School

Dear all

How wonderful it has been to see you all at last! School is not quite normal (as you well know from all of the new arrangements for drop off and collection!), but it is the closest that it has been for some time and what a relief that is for all concerned. Your children have continued to amaze with us with their resilience and risk taking, quickly adapting to new classes and routines with smiles and happiness.

I hope that you will agree that the return to school has mostly gone well, but there are a few points I would like to reiterate in order to make things run as smoothly as possible:

- My communication regarding the staggered start and end to the day was not sufficiently clear and this has led to there being many people accessing the site at the same time. My apologies. Please remember the following:
 - Pupils in Years Reception, 1, 3 and 6 should arrive between 8.35am and 8.45am
 - Pupils in Years Nursery, 2, 4 and 5 should arrive between 8.45am and 8.55am
 - Do not come on to the site before 8.30am
 - Remain socially distant from other families whenever possible
 - Use the yellow markings on paths to know where to walk and where to wait for entry to/exit from classrooms
 - Pupils in Years Reception, 1, 3 and 6 finish their day at 3.10pm and must be collected by 3.20pm
 - Pupils in Years Nursery, 2, 4, and 5 finish their day at 3.20pm and must be collected by 3.30pm

- Do not come on to the site until 3.05pm
- There is more and more evidence that good ventilation has a significant part to play in reducing virus transmission. This means that all the doors and windows at school will be open at all times every day (even in the depths of winter!). As it becomes colder, please send your children to school with extra layers

Teachers and support staff have done a wonderful job of welcoming back children they knew well, and of starting to get to know those in new classes. These relationships, so important for successful learning, will be our focus for the next few weeks. We will also start work on identifying and closing gaps in learning. One to one meetings between teachers and parents will take place on 10th and 12th November (further information about these will be conducted to follow), but if you have particular concerns and would like to speak to your child's teacher, please do one of the following:

- Phone Mrs Bennett who will ask the teacher to call you back when they are not teaching
- Wait until all of the children in the class have been collected before speaking with the teacher outside at an appropriate distance (the yellow lines show where you should stand to meet the 2 metre rule)

I would like to let you know of some changes to school staff. Sadly, 2 members of staff have not re-joining us after the holidays. Jenny Davies, one of the communicators within our Hearing Impaired Department, has decided not to return for health reasons. She will be much missed by us all as her knowledge, skill and dedication meant that she had a hugely positive impact on so many children. Beccy Hatch has been successful in finding a full time position and so will no longer be our Parent Support Worker. She too will be much missed, especially by the many parents to whom she had given such effective support. My thanks to them both for their hard work and commitment during their time at Highworth.

You will know how important it is to have a School Crossing Patroller to help with safe crossing of Totteridge Lane. The road is so busy that Buckinghamshire Council has decided that a second patroller is required. They are therefore looking to recruit someone into this role. Please see below for further information. Your help with sharing this amongst the local community would be much appreciated.

For the most part during these unusual times, I find that it is best not to plan too far in advance, but to take 'a wait and see' approach instead. However, as I look to the term ahead, it is clear that we will have to make some changes. I am sad to say that we will not be able to hold our traditional Harvest celebration in the hall. This will also be the case for our various Christmas performances. We are looking at how we might be able to use technology to create virtual events and more information will follow. I have a meeting with members of Highworth Friends next week to discuss how we can restart their essential fundraising activities in a different way. Again, more information to follow, but we will not be able to hold many of the events that we all know and love.

It would be easy to become disheartened by all that cannot currently happen, but what we, children, parents, staff and governors, have achieved together this week should not be underestimated. Over 400 children have happily returned to school to continue their learning after far too long away. I hope that all concerned will reflect proudly upon this over the weekend.

My love and best wishes for a happy weekend

Clare Pankhania