

Highworth Combined School

Dear all

We have had a terrific week here at school. It is very clear that successful new relationships are strengthening every day and as a result, there is some fantastic learning taking place in every classroom. It is not easy juggling the additional demands of hand washing, cleaning and remaining in bubbles but the Highworth team and your children are rising to the challenge. We are well on the way to finding gaps in learning (using formal methods of assessment for our older pupils, and very informal observations for our younger ones) and good progress has been made in starting to close those gaps. We have a long way to go, but I could not be happier with all that has been achieved in the 3 weeks since our return. A huge thank you to all involved.

That is not to say that there are not challenges for us all! Not least of these is the current situation regarding testing. It is beyond frustrating for everyone that the lack of tests means that we have a significant number of children not able to attend school. We are sending Remote Learning to all concerned, but this is no substitute for children being in class. I have a meeting with our local MP, Steve Baker, this afternoon and hope to be able to explain the significant difficulties that the failure of the testing system creates for our whole community. I'm not sure whether this will make a difference, but I am at a loss to know what else to do. I will keep you updated.

It was little upsetting this morning to see a number of children from different year groups being allowed to play together whilst you were waiting for them to go in to class. We have done so much to keep year group 'bubbles' separate in school; to see all this being undone, even for 5 minutes, was disheartening. I know that some of you have children in classes with different start times, but given that we have 10-minute windows in which children can arrive, there really is no need for you to be waiting in lines or arriving on the site before the start time for your child's class. Please try not to form queues in the morning; there is

space to wait off site on the green opposite the front entrance, or the fields at the back of school. You will know that positive cases of the virus are increasing; please help us to do all we can to minimise transmission and keep the school open by maintaining social distancing whenever possible. Your help with this would be very much appreciated.

A reminder to take great care when driving near to the school; please be vigilant of the fact that there are large number of small children crossing the roads and entering our car park.

Thank you to those who have already responded to say how they would like to receive remote learning. We have been a little surprised at the number of families who have requested paper versions as this style of remote learning will need a lot more help from adults. A reminder that our new web based remote learning will not require you to print anything and will enable children to complete the work much more independently. If you would like to change your mind, please let the class teacher know. If you haven't yet responded to this request for information, please do so as soon as possible.

Let's hope the sun continues to shine this weekend!

My very best wishes for a happy weekend

Clare Pankhania