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Newsletter no. 8

12th February 2021

Dear Parents

We have arrived at a very well-deserved half-term for pupils, staff and parents. I suspect that many of you are looking forward to this half-term, possibly more than most other recent holidays. I simply wanted to thank everyone for all of their hard work and commitment to remote learning over the last six weeks. It has not been easy but together we have managed to design, launch and deliver an engaging, high-quality remote learning programme while at the same time supporting up to 100 pupils in school each day. We seem to have had our annual snow flurry this week, but I do hope everyone takes the opportunity, obviously while complying with the current restrictions, to make the time for some very well-deserved relaxation.

Reopening of school after half term

School will reopen to vulnerable pupils and those with parents who are critical workers. The normal booking system is still in place with all requests by Wednesday 3.15pm considered. We still wait to hear from the Prime Minister over his plans for the full reopening of primary schools. As I have mentioned many times, we hear of the plans at the same time as you, and as such, often have to make extremely quick decisions. We have planned for many possibilities and hopefully, whatever is announced, we will be able to put in measures quickly and safely. As it was over the Christmas period, we will not be contacting you during half term. Similarly, if you do contact school with a non-emergency query, please do not expect a reply until the first day back. As you will understand, staff need a break too!

Dropping off and picking up!

Can I also please remind parents and grandparents that we continue to have a one-way system in place when dropping off and collecting your children. Entrance to school grounds is only via the gate near the Church Hall, with exiting via the gate opposite Hedworthfield Community Centre. Please follow the social distancing guidelines marked out. Arrows indicate the directions to follow. To avoid congestion, only one adult from each family should bring or collect each child(ren) from school please.

Google Meets and live lessons

We intend to continue our provision of live lessons through Google Meets after half term. We have noticed that many children are attending the sessions in either pyjamas or dressing gowns, lying in bed or generally not being 'ready' for learning. As a result, we have decided that pupils need to wear their school sweatshirt or cardigan for these sessions. This will stress the importance of the lesson and a sense of 'belonging' in the group. This addendum has been added to our Behaviour Policy which is available on the school website. Alongside this, we have shared a document for parents that will hopefully support the home learning routine. It is a form of 'reward' chart or ticky box that children can complete during the week. At the end of the week, please send a photo of it to your child's class teacher. We will try to share some of them on our social media pages.

Well Being Day

We had a wonderful day yesterday celebrating our well being. I started the day with a message to the pupils, sharing how I take care of my well being, and this was followed with a number of activities for the children, both at home and in school. All children had an opportunity to take advantage of the glorious snow that covered our playground, and we finished with a really uplifting whole school dance to 'Jerusalem'. It finally ended with some pupils and parents unfairly throwing snowballs at me! Thank you to all the staff for the organisation of the day, and a special shout out to Mrs Jones who came up with the idea of the dance, Miss McCrimmon for sharing the dance moves and to Mrs Arthur for all the support she gave to other members of staff.

Parents' Evenings

Information regarding Parents' Evenings have been shared with you. Remember that this is via the booking system.

Christmas cards

I know it seems a long time ago, but the Friends Christmas Card scheme made £175 for the school. There is a lot of work involved for the members of the Friends team and I would personally like to thank them for their time. Obviously we have not been able to do as many of the fun events we have previously enjoyed, but I am sure that once we are 'back to normal', there will be plenty of opportunities for all our parents and families to be involved.

And finally...

Last week the nation learnt of the sad news of the passing of one of this pandemic's most inspirational optimist: Captain Sir Tom Moore. His ever-helpful words remain as relevant now as they did last Spring.

"To all those people who are finding it difficult at the moment, the sun will shine on you again, and the clouds will go away."

Take care

Mr P Craig

