

Newsletter 3 - Friday 18th September 2020

Dear Families,

The weeks seem to be flying by already! I can't believe we are at the end of the third week. The children continue to settle into their new routines and we are constantly evaluating and reviewing our procedures. With the new routines, lunchtimes have been taking longer than previously with the time taken to serve the children and them eat their lunch however I am pleased to say that we are getting quicker. The children are doing extremely well with this and our new little ones are already so independent at clearing their trays away - it really is incredible how quickly they pick things up!

Attendance: Our attendance has been absolutely fantastic this week! On Wednesday, we had 100% of our children in and on Thursday 99%! At a time like this, it is truly brilliant! We were almost featured on Channel 4 this week as they were doing a piece on attendance in schools post COVID lockdown. Unfortunately, another school pipped us to the post - maybe next time!

If your child is unwell: We are all facing difficult decisions around whether to send our children to school or whether to go to work ourselves when we are feeling unwell, as so many of the COVID19 symptoms are similar to that of a common cold and it can be hard to differentiate between the two. If you are unsure what to do, please do contact the school office where Miss Batkin or Mrs Dennis will be happy to talk it through with you or alternatively you can contact NHS 111 for advice. Similarly, we will contact you if we think your child may be too unwell to attend school as the day wears on or if they have developed any symptoms that we are concerned about. Please bear with us at this time and know that our priority will always be the health, safety and wellbeing of your children.

Survey: Thank you to all the parents that have completed the survey that we sent out last week. It has been really informative and has helped us plan well for any future eventualities. If your child was in our Reception or Year One classes last academic year and you haven't already completed the survey, we'd be very grateful if you could take 5 minutes to do so - see the link below. Many thanks.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EGorfMwEtEi30d9QFOXXNBOE9jl6u5Jp9HTY8Z-3GhUOVYxVTkOVIAYWUE2TzNQUUNZREw1T1VETS4u>

Hands, Face, Space: It is easy for us to get used to the 'new norm' and forget sometimes to follow the guidance that has been laid out by the medical professionals to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe. We are all relying on each other to follow this guidance. Please can I remind everyone not to congregate on the playground or on the streets around school so that we do not come into too close contact with each other to reduce the risk of spreading anything? Thank you so much for your support with this.

Doing things differently: As the COVID situation develops, we are constantly looking at how we can still offer similar opportunities for events that we would normally do such as the Harvest Festival and Parents' Evenings. What is becoming more apparent is that we will have to do most of these events remotely via Microsoft Teams to ensure everyone's safety whilst still providing a similar service to our families. Please see the 'Dates for your Diary' sheet which isn't as full as normal but we have done our best to include the key events that we all enjoy doing. We will keep you fully informed as things develop and if we can make more events in school rather than remotely, we will.

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Reading diaries, Phonics & home learning: We hope you liked the new reading diaries and I know the Year 1 & Year 2 children have been enjoying their reading books. We are hoping to send home library books in the near future too. Our Librarian, Miss Julia, can't come in at the moment but we will try and find a way still to issue the books as we know how much the children love taking a book out of our lovely library. Please do let us know how your child is getting on with their reading book by writing a comment in their reading diary. This way we can adjust the level if it's not quite right. After being out of school for so long, some children need to gain their confidence with reading again. Phonics lessons have started again. These are slightly different as the children have to remain in their bubble for their lessons. This means that I'm getting the pleasure of working with some groups of children in both Year 1 & Year 2 to enable the correct groupings to go ahead. It is a lot of fun first thing every morning! Please see the attached letter regarding Home Learning for Key Stage One (Years 1 & 2) and a similar letter will come out next Friday for Reception class.

Water bottles: Just a reminder that children should only bring water as a drink in their bottles, no squash or juice please.

Harrier Award: On Monday in our virtual assembly, I will be introducing the children to our Harrier Value for this half term which is Resilience. I will present the first Harrier Awards for this year for children that have shown this value. Since the 20th March, nothing has been more important than resilience and children generally have an innate ability to be resilient that can often be inspiring for us as adults. However, we are not underestimating how tough the last few months will have been on the children and we intend to help them build their resilience through various activities in school. On 9th October, we will be supporting the Young Minds #Hello Yellow day that marks World Mental Health Day. All children are invited to come to school wearing yellow for the day and donate £1 which will go to the Young Minds charity. There will be activities all day to teach the children about how to keep their minds healthy.

On that note, I do hope that you get some time to relax and enjoy the weekend while the weather is still fine. We look forward to seeing you all on Monday. Have a great weekend!

Best wishes,
Mrs Hopkins & The Henhurst Ridge Primary Academy Family