

Harleston C.E. Primary Academy

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Interim Headteacher: Mrs M Foreman

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Many of us are still finding the continued restrictions to daily life very hard but hopefully as the restrictions begin to ease we can begin to enjoy our lives more 'normally'. The lovely sunny weather has helped many of us enjoy time outside (while observing social distancing!).

Half term week

Next week is half term holiday and we will not be setting learning activities on Google Classrooms so that teachers and children can enjoy a restful few days.

The school will remain open as usual for the children of key workers and vulnerable children and our usual arrangements for drop off and pick up will continue. Lunches will continue to be provided and snacks will also be on sale during morning break.

Phased reopening of schools

During the half term holiday the government will review the current situation so they can decide if it is appropriate and safe for schools to reopen to some year groups from 1st June.

Over the last few days we have been making lots of plans so that the school can reopen to different year groups when it is safe to do so and as always, I want to promise you that I will only be reopening Harleston if it is totally safe to do so. The government is going to make its next big announcement on 28th May so I cannot provide you with additional information about the arrangements and any potential dates for children returning to school. I have received an excellent number of responses from the two surveys about which children will and will not be returning to school and this has enabled me to plan for the children to be grouped provisionally. I cannot release any of this information until I can make final plans on the 29th May.

It really is important for me to say that it may not prove possible to open for more pupils in the week commencing 1st June, and we could still be in the current provision of only providing care for key worker and vulnerable children for the whole of that week.

We will only open to children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 when it is safe to do so.

Please refer to the survey letter that allowed you to book a place for your child for an overview of the initial arrangements we are putting in place to reduce the risk to children and staff as they return to school as these all follow the current government guidance.

In particular, please note:

- There will be changes to the organisation of the classes meaning your child may not have their original class teacher
- We will be maintaining care for key worker and vulnerable children
- The high numbers of staff required to maintain much smaller class sizes (we are calling them pods) means that we might not be able to open fully to every year group before the end of term

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- The children (and parents) will need to be trained carefully in new ways of moving round the school site and a strict one way system will be in place for arriving at and then leaving the school in the morning and afternoon of each day

The guidance given to the public about social distancing is not identical to that being given to primary schools. While we will still be very careful about handwashing, sanitising and catching sneezes and coughs, alongside you understanding that outside of school you do need to still follow the rules about social distancing, the pods we will create in school will have less emphasis on strict 2 metre social distancing. We want a happy, safe and reasonably adjusted learning environment for our children where they may even end the year with some lovely memories of things they have done to end their school year.

When a date for wider opening is confirmed, the staff will all come to school for training so that everyone is fully prepared for the new way that we will run our school. The pods can be prepared and everyone will be completely trained in how to keep everyone safe.

Online teaching and learning

After half term, Google Classroom will be back up and running with activities for children to complete at home for those who are unable to attend school as their classmates return. Work will still be provided for the year groups that are not yet able to return.

FSM Meals and Hampers

Arrangements for the hampers continue as usual for children who are entitled to them but not returning to school. Children entitled to FSM who are eligible for one, will all be provided with a school packed lunch.

Child Care Provision

Our current provision will continue for the children of key workers and vulnerable students after the half term holiday.

It just remains to wish you an enjoyable half term and I hope that I can welcome back some children into our school in the weeks following the holiday. Even over the holiday, from Tuesday to Friday, some of us will be on site, not just carrying out the childcare, ready and able to support you as best as we can in these challenging times. Please forgive the element of uncertainty in this update which I know must be completely frustrating for some of you. As ever, I am striving to keep you fully informed of my plans to open when it is safe to do so. My grateful thanks to everyone for all your efforts to keep the children learning.

As someone who was meant to go to South Africa for Easter, I leave you with a quote from a very special South African whose words are so powerful - and this is an uplifting thought:

'Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.'

So with my best wishes to you and all your family,

Mary Foreman
Interim Headteacher