



A letter from Miss Holgate

2nd March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you so much for your continued support this term. We are really proud of the work that our children have been doing this year. I have to say that I was overwhelmed by the positivity from parents in our questionnaire.

Prayer for today

This week's prayer is one we looked at together in January; I believe that it is just as important today. We look forward, together, to the new full opening of school and the hope which it brings.

I know I am thankful that the vaccine programme is in full force and that we are able to test staff twice weekly to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

I really am rejoicing in the gift of each new day and being able to welcome our children back to Harleston Primary Academy on Monday 8th March.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

This term to date.

As a community, I think we are ready for all children to return to school. We know that there are going to be challenges ahead of us, but together we will do what is best for the children in our care.

These last few weeks have been ones of hope and I have really enjoyed seeing all of the work our children have been doing on google classrooms, from Soaring to Success certificates to snow creatures and so much in between. Our children are a credit to us all.

I believe that every last one of them deserves my 'Wow' moment for this week. I am looking forward to being able to see them all very soon.

Staggered timings

I wanted to talk a little bit about the staggered start times. These will be for the next three weeks, until Easter. If the R rate continues to drop and, if adults are able to keep a strict 2



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meter distance, then we are hoping to reduce this staggered start to 15 minutes. We plan to return to normal opening times by the summer, but this is Covid dependent. We know that there may have to be changes and adaptations, depending on Government advice but we are hopeful.

We decided to make the move from a 30 minute grace period of opening before Christmas, but lockdown meant that this was not implemented. This system meant that children could potentially lose 5 hours of class time a week and made it very difficult for children to settle in their classrooms in the morning, thus not giving them the best opportunities to flourish in school. The 30 minutes at the end of the day was a very similar 'lost' time because teachers were looking for which parents were collecting their children whilst also trying to support children in the classroom. It was also very clear that there were 'pressure points' at certain times both at drop-off and collection. We listened to the parents who told us that they were concerned about these times and also about adults socially distancing at these times.

We therefore made the decision to have clear, timed starts for children to enable them to have the best start and end of the day possible. This also enables us to be as Covid secure as we can. This will enable the teachers to timetable well structured lessons for your child. It will also enable our support team to plan the interventions that your child may need in the coming months.

Questionnaire outcomes

Thank you to all of you who completed our questionnaire and for your honesty in the replies. This will help us in building strong links together, to enable our children to Flourish and Grow this year.

From the questionnaire responses, it was clear that some working parents would appreciate a before school club. We have been in contact with our sports providers and this is something that we will be able to offer limited spaces to after Easter. I am waiting to hear about numbers for this club. As soon as we have more information about this we will share it with you. This is a very exciting opportunity for the future.

As you will have seen from my email and questionnaire, we are very aware that there are families in the school with children in both EYFS/KS1 and KS2 and that these children have different start times. All children who this affects will be invited to a 30 minute before or after school club within their year group - this will allow those families to drop the children off at the same time. We will be assessing where we have spaces in these groups and will offer these to children of key workers first and then to other parents who may need a space.

We are really looking forward to seeing all of the children next week and we know that this year has been difficult for everyone. We have some exciting plans in place to support our children moving forward.



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Lunchtimes

We will be offering lunchtime clubs to our children to support them in rebuilding friendships and to allow them to explore different hobbies and interests. These are being run by our fantastic school team. After Easter, we are hoping to have outside providers at least twice a week.

We are fortunate enough to have a wonderful kitchen team and we will be able to offer a range of lunch options for children across the whole school.

Key Stage 2 children will eat their lunch in their classrooms - hot dinners are going to be available in take away containers and school cold lunches will still be available - these will be delivered to your child.

EYFS and Key Stage 1 children will also have a full range of meals on offer. Cold lunches and pasta will be delivered to the classroom and hot lunches will be eaten in the dining hall. We have made this decision to allow for thorough cleaning and to ensure that children do not overlap in where they are eating.

The first week back (8th March 2021)

We are going to be taking Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th March to really focus on wellbeing and about the children relearning the routines within school. We understand that they may not have seen their friends in a long time and that the routines and expectations of school need to be highlighted. Each class teacher will work with their class to ensure that they are all ready and have agreed on their expectations for the coming weeks.

For the next two weeks there will be a dedicated wellbeing focus every day and class teachers will be working to ensure that children feel as safe as possible and are comfortable in school. If your child needs extra support then they may be referred to 'The Hub' for extra support.

We are expecting to deliver the same curriculum content and will not be cutting out lessons - we have made the decision that an average lesson in Key Stage 2 will be 45 minutes and in Key Stage 1 the average lesson will be 30-45 minutes long. This will allow pupils to engage with a wider variety of lessons a day and will support them in the transition back to face to face learning.



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Gates and timings

Until Easter Key Stage 2 children (Year 3-6) will be in school from 9.00am - 3.00pm and Reception and Key Stage 1 children (Reception - Y2) will be in school 9.30am - 3.30pm.

If you have children across the two groups your child will be invited to a club either 9.00am - 9.30am R, Y1 & Y2 or 3.00pm - 3.30pm (Y3-6). Your child will be in a sports club with peers from **their year group**. If you have children across the key stages then your children are guaranteed a space at this club and you will receive a letter tomorrow to confirm that you would like a place. Once these places are filled we may be able to offer further spaces to Key workers.

Gate A & B (entry gates) will be open at **8.50am - 9.05am** for Key Stage 2 and Morning club drop off.

Gate A & B (entry gates) will be open at **9.20am - 9.35am** for Reception and Key Stage 1 morning drop off.

Please allow your child to walk themselves into their classroom in the morning. This has worked really well during our partial opening. Staff will be available to support them in getting to their rooms, if they are worried.

If you need to take your child to their classroom, please make a member of staff aware and they will be able to support you to do this.

Gate A & B (entry gates) will be open at **2.55pm - 3.05pm** for Key Stage 2 collection. Gate C & D are the exit gates and will open to allow you to leave the site via the one way system.

Gate A & B (entry gates) will be open at **3.20pm - 3.35pm** for Key Stage 1 and Afternoon Club collection. Gate C & D are the exit gates and will open to allow you to leave the site via the one way system.

Pupils will be collected from outside of their classroom. Key Stage 2 children at Afternoon Club will be collected from the Key Stage 2 playground.

Mr Carter has kindly put together a map so that you can see the one way system - this will be shared with all families this week.

Covid Restrictions

We are still requesting that, when you are on site, a mask is worn. Staff will be wearing masks around the site and in classrooms. If children need to see staff's faces for lip reading



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and speech and language, then a visor may be worn. We ask that parents do the same and wear a mask whilst on site. If you are not wearing a mask you will be asked why you are not doing so - this is not meant to cause offence - it is to ensure that we are keeping everyone safe.

We require all adults to remain at least 2 meters apart from each other - staff will be adhering to this and we know that our school community will ensure that they do the same, to help prevent the risk of transmission.

The office is physically closed to parents at this time, but we are happy to speak to you via MyEd, telephone or email.

We would also ask that parents do not enter the school building, unless specifically asked to do so.

Lateral Flow Testing

I wanted to mention this very briefly. Primary aged children are not being offered LFT at school. I know some of you have children at ASHS and this is slightly different for them.

The Government has said that tests will be available to families of children at Primary age, but these are not through school.

I also wanted to reassure you that staff within school are offered LFT twice weekly. This will mean that we are more able to pick up adults who are asymptomatic.

Easter

With three and a half school weeks to go until the Easter Holidays, I would have hoped to have seen more of you to have been able to be around the school a lot more. It is a bizarre time for all of us and I think that the children in our care are incredible for their resilience this year.

I am excited that the 'Friends of HPA' are planning a hamper competition for children this Easter and I cannot wait to see all the lovely goodies which they can put together.

We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and enthusiastic team here at HPA. I know I am grateful for everything that they are doing on a daily basis and the plans we have for the future are very exciting.

The Hub

During this 'lockdown' we have developed our 'Harleston Hub' - more details will follow (hopefully with pictures!). The Hub is a one stop shop for support within the school. Mrs Botwright (our SENDco) and her fantastic team are going to be based there and will be able



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to offer a wide range of support to our children. This will include virtual 1:1 and small group work, targeted support for small groups, nurture provision and interventions. We are incredibly lucky to have such a fantastic resource at our fingertips. I am excited to share new projects and ideas from our 'Hub' in the coming months. 'The overall vision is that all pupils with SEND receive the best possible provision to enable them to Flourish by supporting to reduce their barriers to learning and give them the opportunities to grow as learners' - Mrs Botwright

New Staff

I know that I introduced our new starters in December, but I wanted to remind everyone of our teachers in school. The following teachers will be meeting most of the children for the first time this week (although they will know some of them from Google Classroom)

Mr Anderson - Reception

Mr Taylor - Year 3

Miss Gardner - Year 5

Miss Reynolds and Miss Cuthill - Year 6

Mr Carter is our Assistant Head for Inclusion and Miss Moss is our Assistant Head for Curriculum.

Mrs Botwright became our SENDco and Miss Scofield became our Reading Champion in January.

Feedback from parents

I wanted to share with you some of the comments from our questionnaire. These comments are on the full opening of school from 8th March 2021.

'I am happy that children are returning, it's so important in many ways.'

'Great!'

'A little nervous as been so long, but last time it was fab. You done amazing work'

'I feel that children need a routine and are willing to learn more in a school environment, I feel this is needed and better for them.'

'I think the teachers have done an amazing job dealing with the current situation.'

There were lots of other comments about how people were feeling about returning to school, the overall feeling from the questionnaire is a positive one and one of hope.



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I think that there are some people who are feeling a little worried about the return to school and that is why we are taking the extra precautions detailed in this letter.

I want to take a line or two to thank those of you who have taken the time to contact the school during this latest lockdown to offer your support for the staff and children in school.

Thank you.

Your words of encouragement and support have helped the staff at Harleston Primary Academy no end. It is important in these times that we are kind to ourselves and kind to one another.

I wholeheartedly believe that we are all trying to do what's best for our children so that they can flourish and grow as members of our community.

Kindest Regards,

Hannah Holgate