

19 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Remote Learning Continuation – Years 2, 3, 4 and 5

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to you all for your overwhelming support, cooperation and words of positivity relating to our current remote learning model. Whilst this has understandably been a challenging half term, it has also been a hugely successful one, and I hope you share my appreciation for the quality of teaching and learning the staff have been able to maintain, as well as the additional pastoral and co-curricular opportunities that have been made available.

The increased volume of video and audio content has allowed pupils to feel closer to the teacher, and fully engaged with their lessons, with ever-increasing independence. The addition of daily Form Times, a daily social lunch time, the extended Form Time on a Friday, and Show and Tell galleries, have all helped increase interaction with teachers and friends during a difficult time. Finally, the wealth of content available on the Junior School Pastoral Firefly page has provided pupils with a great deal of activities and support. The content that has been shared by the pupils has been wonderful to see, with particular highlights being the Year 3 and 5 Instrumental Concert and the Top Tips for Pupils blog. If you have not yet had an opportunity to see these yet, I do urge you to do so as they will no doubt brighten your day!

As we approach the second half of the Trinity Term, we are edging closer to pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 returning to school. We are hopeful that, all being well, and in accordance with the government thinking, we will be able to welcome all Junior School pupils back to school by the end of the academic year, so that they can see their teachers and friends before the summer holiday. We really are missing the pupils and the Form Time sessions are not just a highlight for the pupils, but the teachers as well! The date for a possible return to school, for the remaining year groups, has not yet been outlined, but I will, of course, be in touch once I have this information. We hope for a successful first period of a phased, safe return for certain year groups and I fully expect that this will make the next phase of return even easier to navigate.

Having discussed the remote learning model within the Junior School Leadership Team and with Form Teachers in these year groups, and considering parental feedback, we feel it is in the best interests of pupils to continue with the current remote learning model for the second half of the Trinity Term. We feel that pupils are now confident with how to access their lessons and resources, they are becoming more independent in doing so and there are increasingly more opportunities for them, such as the House competitions and Pastoral page updates and activities. Making significant changes at this stage for what could be a relatively short period of time, could be detrimental to both the academic and pastoral wellbeing of the pupils and unsettle an established routine which is largely working well.

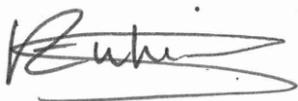
Children of essential workers within these year groups will continue to be supervised by members of the Junior School staff in the JS ICT Room, and will have access and support for their remote lessons, as has been the case in recent weeks. I will write to the parents of these children this week, with a further update and more detailed information as to how this will work, once pupils return to school in other year groups from 1 June. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer supervision for siblings of pupils in the returning year groups (Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) if they are not children of essential workers.

You may be interested in the provision and measures which will be put in place for the returning pupils, and you are very welcome to read the letter I have sent today to the parents of children in these year groups. This will be available to you in the coronavirus section of the website and in the parent portal. We have received some queries as to whether we could consider other year groups returning in addition to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Whilst we would dearly wish that all pupils could return, we will, and should, continue to make decisions consistently in line with government guidance, who have access to the current and evolving scientific thinking on this matter. At present, the guidelines and advice from government is quite clear that only these year groups should be permitted to return to school from June 1.

We understand that the return to school for some pupils and not others may be a huge disappointment to some of the pupils. It will be difficult for them to process why it is a different scenario for some pupils and will likely feel quite unfair. We would be grateful if you could assist us in explaining why a phased return has been proposed by the government and provide them with the reassurance that this is hopefully the first step towards a full primary school return, but interim measures are needed to ascertain whether it is safe to do so (all in more child friendly terms, of course!). Pupil and teacher safety is, of course, our main priority. Form Teachers will be deciding how best to share this information with their class during the extended Form Time on Friday, in order that the message is consistent and that pupils have the opportunity to ask any questions. It is not lost on us that the impact of a return to school for some year groups and not others will have an impact on the pupils who will remain at home, despite there being no change to their provision. Should you feel that your child is finding this particularly challenging, please do let their Form Teacher know in order that they can arrange an individual meeting with them to speak to them about some of their worries and concerns. We will continue to be there for them in just the same way.

We are very hopeful that we can welcome the entire Junior School back soon and we will continue to keep you informed of any changes or updates following government guidance. I hope that you all have a happy and restful Exeat.

Yours Sincerely



Miss L Whitwood
Head of Junior School