

THE FEDERATION OF THE DOWNS & NORTHBOURNE CEP SCHOOLS

"if you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible." (Matthew: 17 v20)

Newsletter – February 2021

I am sure that you have all been following the news closely with regards to the pandemic and in particular any statements regarding school's returning to full capacity.

What we know at this moment as we approach half term is that

- The **earliest** schools **might** "begin to re-open" will be Monday 8th March, which is third week of next term
- There will be a plan/review, with further updates set out by the Prime Minister on Monday 22nd February (the first day of term four)
- When the decision to return has been made, schools will get two weeks' notice of this.

This does mean that we have at least three more school weeks of remote learning under the current arrangements for schools. I know that this will be disappointing for many families and the children, but there does seem to be a glimmer of hope that there is an end in sight.

I am very proud of what our families are achieving with their children during this time, and by the resilience that our children are showing. Working together through this, we can come out stronger for it as a community.

Have a restful half term break. Keep safe and well.

Monday 22nd February

This is still a staff training day and school will be closed to all pupils.

Children that have received an invite to attend school in term four will do so from Tuesday 23rd February.

Symptom-free COVID 19 testing for key workers and their families

Kent County Council has launched a symptom-free testing scheme for families across the County from 4 January 2021.

The test uses a lateral flow device and can detect in 30 minutes whether an individual has the COVID-19 virus.

Any key worker and members of their family can book a test.

To book a test, please follow this link: <https://kcc.healthit.org.uk/covbook/home>

What to do if your child has a positive coronavirus test result and is attending school every day/some days

Inform the school straightaway – you may get test results out of school hours, if this is the case please phone **07756807060**. Please note this number is only for reporting a positive test result out of school hours (evenings/weekends/holidays). At all other times continue to phone the school office.

Positive COVID cases

As I was preparing this newsletter, the number of positive cases in school meant that Public Health England believed that we met the escalation criteria.

In consultation with PHE and our CEO, the difficult decision was made to close the school for a few days in an attempt to stop the transmission rate.

We have been very blessed up until this point in time with so few cases. However, over the last couple of weeks, we have been made aware of positive cases amongst children who are at home and now with the latest cases in school; it just serves as a reminder that the virus is still prevalent, even though rates are falling, and that we mustn't become complacent.

Many of our cases had no symptoms and only came to light through accessing the KCC symptom free testing. Please do make use of this service to help reduce transmission. Also book a COVID test as soon as any symptoms present themselves.

Remember to follow all the national guidance to keep everyone safe and well.



"How will you work towards achieving your hopes and dreams?"

*Discuss, with your family, what this means to you.....
Share your best examples with your class teacher*

Remote learning during lockdown

The starting point for learning at home each week is the school website– curriculum tab/remote learning/year group.

Here you will find the weekly plan that will provide structure for your week of learning. The plan provides links to recorded lessons provided by a range of reputable providers such as National Oak Academy, BBC programmes and White Rose.

Activities to be completed through your child’s log in to purple mash (whole school), 10tick (Years 3-6) and Spag.com (years 5 and 6) will also be indicated on this plan. Completed work can be uploaded via purple mash for teachers to review and give feedback.

Funding has been made available to schools to update their virtual learning platforms and our infrastructure changes began in December, with a changeover to Microsoft TEAMS. We have begun using this with staff for staff meetings and staff training which has reduced the need to have too many adults in one room. We are now in the process of developing the use of Teams with pupils.

In due course you will be receiving details on how your child will be able to access their TEAMS account and gradually TEAMS will be the tool for children to share their learning with their class teachers.

We have been receiving lots of feedback from parents and carers, the vast majority of which I am very pleased to report is very positive indeed. We recognise that there is currently a wide spectrum of thought on this subject.

When planning how we will continue to approach remote learning we will always take into account this range of views as well as considering the limitations that most of us are likely to experience.

Notable Achievements

We are still celebrating our pupils’ achievements in after school activities so please do share to get a mention here:

Esmae (Y2) has raised £625 for The Princes Trust by agreeing to have her hair cut off. Lockdown has prevented this from happening just yet, but once over, Esmae is first in the queue for her haircut!!

A very admirable act and a worthwhile cause. Well done

Community kindness and compassion

At the start of this term, I was contacted by Mr. and Mrs. Heijne offering their support to the school. As a result of this conversation, a very generous donation of two brand new laptops arrived on site to be used by our school community.

As we reach the end of term three, we received a call from Mrs. Ellis. Sadly, her husband has passed away but prior to this they had both expressed a wish to support a local school and some of their more vulnerable families. Mrs Ellis, in her husband’s memory, will be making a monetary donation to our school to be used for this purpose.

Both these contacts came from members of our local community without solicitation “*just because they wanted to do something to help at such a difficult time*”. Their compassion and kindness towards our school community is overwhelmingly appreciated. We give our heartfelt thanks to both families.

Thank you from The Downs CEP

SEVERE WEATHER – hopefully not!!

Let’s keep our fingers crossed that there is no snow this winter.

However, in the event of the school having to close, information will be available via:

- KCC website www.kent.gov.uk/winter or www.kentclosures.co.uk
- the school website www.downs.kent.sch.uk
- by text
- local radio stations – Heart FM and BBC Radio Kent

Milk – Children can have milk at morning break:

- Free milk for children under the age of five
- Free milk for children who are currently a free school meal child
- £1.10 a week for children aged five or older and not a free school meal child.
- If your child is a pupil premium child contact school if you would like milk for your child at no cost to you

For more information contact the school office or register at www.coolmilk.com

Dates for diary on the next page

DATES FOR DIARY

Term One 1st September 2020 – 23rd October 2020

Half term break 24th October – 1st November 2020

Term Two 2nd November – 18th December 2020

Christmas break 19th December – 3rd January 2021

Term Three 4^h January – 12th February 2021

Half term break 13th February – 21st February 2021

Term Four 22nd February – 1st April 2021

Easter break 2nd April – 18th April 2021

Term Five 19th April – 28th May 2021

Half term break 29th May – 6th June 2021

Term Six 7th June – 21st July 2021

Staff Development Days when school is closed to children

Tuesday 1st September 2020

Monday 2nd November 2020

Monday 22nd February 2021

Friday 25th June 2021

Monday 28th June 2021

New academic Year 2020-2021

Term Three – NOW IN LOCKDOWN

Friday 12th February Last day of term three – normal finish

Term Four – subject to change as we await information about the lifting of lockdown

Monday 22nd February School closed to children – training day

Tuesday 23rd February Children start

Monday 1st March Year 1 Forest School starts

Thursday 4th March World Book Day

Friday 12th March Comic Relief TBC

Thursday 1st April Last day of term four - children can be collected from 1.30pm.

Term Five

Monday 19th April Children start

Monday 19th April Year 3 Forest School starts

All of May Year 2 statutory assessment month - cancelled

Monday 3rd May Bank Holiday

Monday 10th May Year 6 SATS all week - cancelled

Friday 28th May Last day of term five – normal finish

Term Six

Monday 7th June Children start

Monday 7th June Year 6 Forest School

Monday 7th June Year 4 Multiplication Tests all week - cancelled

Monday 7th June Year 1 Phonic assessments all week - cancelled