

## **Brockwell Junior School**

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Headteacher: Miss Catherine Holmes

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Emma Crutchley

11<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'd like to update you regarding our position at this time, further connectivity, the National Academy and transition developments. Please know that whilst I would typically write to year group parents separately - especially our new Year 2 families - I think it may be helpful for everyone to read about other aspects of juniors during this period. I hope you agree and will forgive the length of the letter.

### **Wider Opening – Year 6**

Whilst we had worked at immense speed to prepare for wider opening to year 6 from June 1<sup>st</sup>, we were asked by the Local Authority to ensure a gradual increase in children attending, making sure we could support additional key workers who were called back to work. Over the last two weeks our keyworker places have increased significantly which resulted in us needing to review capacity of all classrooms to discover if we could actually accommodate all those year 6 parents who confirmed by May 22<sup>nd</sup> that a place was required.

In addition, on June 5<sup>th</sup>, I received a letter from the Director for Public Health in Derbyshire giving his assessment of the local situation regarding whether the government's five tests had been met locally. Specifically, he states that the ability to meet the fifth test relies on the effectiveness of Test, Trace and Isolate, which is still not fully operational. He also sets out reasons why it is difficult to determine if 'Reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board' is a test that has been met. We have implemented many of his suggestions to reduce transmission and would like to highlight that your social distancing when on site is a key aspect to reduce community transmission.

Following his advice regarding a phased return; by giving keyworkers the time to talk to employers and let us know their needs this term - and by waiting until June 15<sup>th</sup> - we believe we have been fair to our priority group and are welcoming those who are returning at a much safer point. New systems have had a little time to become clearer in practice to staff in school. Thank you again for your patience.

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Letters to parents who confirmed a year 6 place have been issued with a plan of the 'bubbles' in school and arrangements from June 15<sup>th</sup>. Letters have also been sent to all our keyworker parents with updated arrangements also.

As the days pass, if you are a year 6 parent who would like to send your child, do let us know and we will add your child's name to our reserve list. Please know that whilst we will do our best to make sure they are happy, returning for social aspects as they understood it before is likely to result in your child reporting disappointment to you. Due to the numbers in each bubble and the rules such as one bubble not mingling at all with another, staggered playtimes and social distancing on site, it will feel very different. We have given a nod to which secondary school your child has been allocated to help decide groups but this wasn't entirely possible for all the children. Nevertheless, if secondary colleagues are able to Google Meet we will be able to group children with minimal breaking of the bubble! Along with the key worker year 6 children we have just under half of year 6 back in school so if you are continuing to home school, please be reassured many others are too.

Work in school will be mirroring the home expectations of year 6 by using White Rose Maths, Talk4Writing booklets and novels they select such as those on Wordsmith or The Ickabog for example. Children in school will select from their Home Learning Week Planner too.

Like you, I find it very upsetting that a cohort of children who should be celebrating the end of their primary years and enjoying time together are actually distanced away from one another in a manner some may find frustrating, especially given their increasing maturity. As always during this term, year 6 children literally 'grow out' of primary school and show they are ready for their new adventure. I know that as the weeks pass we will be eagerly anticipating any changes in government restrictions that allow the children to celebrate this milestone together.

### **Home Learning**

I hope many of you are enjoying this time with children at home and are satisfied with the work being provided. Many children will be adoring time with family and the one to one tuition – whatever time you can give. We can see that lots of you are devoting time and much energy into creative and wonderful activities. You have all been amazing and, without wanting to sound patronising, well done to you all. Whilst I am at school most of the working week, I have two primary age children learning at home and I know how hard it can be to motivate them, nurture them, provide social support and ensure they are making some progress – all whilst maintaining some boundaries to sustain a peaceful routine. I've decided I'm more successful gaining their attention if I start with - 'Hey Guys' – in a tone like the screen idols they are mesmerised by!

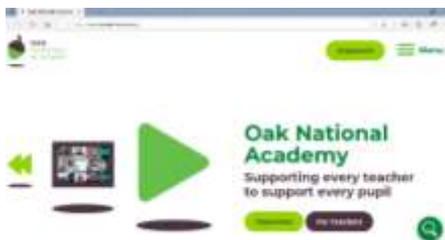
Whilst I always try to see opportunity in a new challenge, I am very concerned by the duration of time most children are now away from school. I'm hugely conscious this

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week that with the news headlines regarding other year groups not returning before September some of you may be feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and possibly feeling like it is difficult to cope. Your child may be refusing to work or finding aspects of the work hard – or too easy – and you may have other significant pressures to juggle each day. Not being able to provide a perfectly acceptable solution goes against all my instincts and makes me continually restless.

Pending a National Strategy to get all children back, we aim to continue to develop our Teacher Meets to support you in helping children feel an expectation to complete key learning tasks each week. They will also provide opportunities to connect together from a more social aspect. If you haven't managed to access a Teacher Meet this week, do try again next week. You'll be sent a code to access the meeting on Google Meet. If your child is anxious you could show them the first one by turning the microphone and camera off so they can watch safely from a distance. I'm so grateful to the teachers for trying these and ask you to support them by being understanding with any hiccups as they develop increasing confidence with this approach.

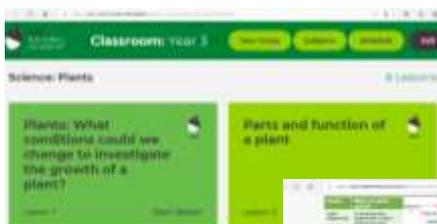
I know the teachers think carefully about work they add to the year group planners. However, I'd like to draw your attention to the National Oak Academy website which has many virtual lessons linked to many areas. As an example, if you look at the science lessons, you will find lessons that cover the statutory aspects of the curriculum in detail. For example, plants in year 3. Some are pitched highly but they are certainly lessons that will educate and allow your child to access some lessons of quality independently. Just go to <https://www.thenational.academy/>



To make your own selection click classroom.



From 'Find Lessons', select the year group and subject (Science is in 'Foundation')



Select the lesson (watch out for any quiz at the start which you'll need to close before the lesson starts).



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Once again, please keep in touch through Seesaw and prioritise the following:

- [www.whiterosemaths.com](http://www.whiterosemaths.com) (worksheets Y2 to Y6 on our website and if you'd like more the bitesize daily maths follows the same objectives).
- Reading – remember Derbyshire offer a free e-book service where you can borrow e-books that you download to your device.
- Wider daily selections from your 'Popplet'- weekly task planner.

Be realistic about how much your child can cover in a week and allow them time to do aspects of the curriculum that they enjoy to boost their self-esteem and sense of achievement. As I'm sure you know all too well, being active and having time to play is also essential for their welfare. Please be kind to yourself too. If you can sustain a learning pattern until the end of term, on July 17<sup>th</sup>, you can be sure your child will have moved on sufficiently in their learning.

I am also mindful that we usually cover lots of aspects of relationships and growing up curriculum content this term. I will send you our RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) policy and copies of the content to support you should you decide to use the materials to support your child's understanding. Teachers use the content knowing the maturity of individuals in a class so please don't try and cover it all.

### **Transition Year 6**

I've seen copies of some of the letters you have received from secondary schools. This year, we are working with six secondary schools. I'd just like to confirm that we have been holding meetings sharing important information regarding the children moving to new schools. This includes academic achievement, individual needs and anything we feel the school needs to know to ensure your children are well supported. They are trying to provide aspects of transition but it looks unlikely that they will have transition days on site this term. I would anticipate this to be a priority in September once children are permitted back to school. Please keep an eye on their websites and contact them directly if you have had no correspondence at all within the next week. Whilst they may not get the same sense of excitement, maybe it means they don't turn all too 'cool' quite so soon!

### **Transition to new classes Year 3, 4 and 5**

Teachers are writing reports which we hope you will find useful despite this closure period. These will be sent home nearer the end of term. Whilst I am unable to make any plans involving cohorts being in school, and I have not yet consulted with teachers, please know that we are aware that some children find changes particularly stressful and we will work with you when the time is right to make the changes as calm and easy for you all as possible. Once government restrictions change - be it now or nearer September - I anticipate governor and community support to ensure a transition to new

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classes has children's mental health as a priority. We certainly will be flexible with individuals who may find a full time return more difficult.

## **Transition Year 2**

This week would usually be the start of this process with me leading the whole cohort of children around our grounds and through all our classes. Whilst lots of the usual aspects cannot happen, we are now beginning what I hope will be a positive transition to start a wonderful junior experience.

Plans may evolve quickly once we can react to any lifting of restrictions so it was crucial that we received your registration forms promptly. I believe all our year 2 families are now on the email system which is fantastic. Thank you all. Here are some of our plans to date:

- Spelling, Handwriting, Maths and English home learning work for Year 2 has been added to the website so you can become familiar with our approach.  
[www.brockwell-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk](http://www.brockwell-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk) Look under Learning@brockwell/homelearning/English or Mathematics
- We have been speaking to Headteachers and class teachers to share key information about your child's needs. Children on the SEND Register have already been contacted.
- Children from Brockwell Infants will remain in their existing classes.
- We've been preparing a 'Jumping to Juniors' activity pack which will be inside a Brockwell Junior Bookbag which your child will be invited to collect at a mutually convenient time. The pack will have information about school, our values and a letter from our most brilliant ambassadors – the children.
- Mrs Crutchley, our amazing Deputy Headteacher, or I will be contacting you by telephone over the next couple of weeks to say hello and arrange a socially distanced visit to school after hours when your child will meet me and their class teacher.
- We will be providing you with a code to access our platform, SeeSaw, so we can post some clips or key information during the term. In time, this will bring your child 'online' with our home learning and allow the teachers to give feedback to your children.
- Later in the term, we will invite you to some Teacher – and Headteacher – Meets on Google Meet where I look forward to sharing some stories and getting to know the children a little more.
- I will be emailing key information about school routines directly to parents.

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- At the most appropriate time – be it this term, during the summer, or in September, children will have a taster session or day before building up to full time attendance.

I'm very much looking forward to getting to know all our new families. If you have any concerns about any aspect, we can discuss this together during our phone conversation – please raise anything at all as nothing is too trivial.

### **Message regarding our building**

I'd just like everyone to know that for several years I have been working with governors to secure a capital building project funded through local authority agreed funding. The exciting new build includes a new entrance and office near the year 6 classrooms and a reworking of group spaces in our narrow corridor area. It will make a huge difference to our school and was due to go ahead this summer. I'm expecting it to now be postponed. I share this with you as I am aware our entrance looks tired, yet to allocate resources to improving this for the short term is not good use of money.

Additionally, our classrooms have had some marvellous displays removed for improvement work I've managed to have done during the closure. One of the year 3 classrooms looks so different to normal and I'd like to be clear that it is simply a work in progress and will be beautiful by the time our new Year 3 children are happily learning in there.

Finally, thank you to those of you who have sent messages of support or appreciation. I can't tell you how much they mean to us. I see staff working so hard and now they are asked to continue home learning and be in class - I know they will do their very best for each child. This situation is so far away from perfect but please know your kind words and notes of thanks give us encouragement to keep going.

Very best wishes to everyone,

Catherine Holmes

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