

23.4.2020

Coronavirus update

Dear parents & carers,

What a strange start to the Summer term this has been. Although we are still open for vulnerable children and children of key workers, it is not the same. I feel a deep sorrow for all our children, who will not understand why they cannot see their friends or family and just want to be back at school learning and having fun. Most of all, I think of the families who have lost loved ones. I am so very sorry for your loss.

It has been heart-warming to listen to the applause and cheers echoing around Harrogate on Thursday evenings during the weekly Clap for Carers. I have also been encouraged by the countless stories of volunteers looking after the vulnerable members of their communities or fundraising for the NHS. It is true that a crisis really does bring out the best in people.

Phone calls from teachers

This week class teachers have been ringing round all the families in their classes. We wanted to speak to you all to let you know how much we are missing the children and looking forward to being back together again. Teachers will also be asking if you are having any problems accessing the home learning through our website – this is a good opportunity to ask for lost login details for Times Table Rock Stars or SpellingShed! We are using our personal phones to call from so the number will come up as ‘withheld’.

Food vouchers

At the start of this crisis we committed to ensuring that none of our children went hungry. To that end, school staff worked tirelessly delivering food parcels, liaising with local charities and purchasing thousands of pounds worth of ASDA vouchers for all children eligible for Free School Meals. We have now moved over to the Government scheme which is being provided by EdenRed. Eligible parents will now receive a weekly email from EdenRed inviting them to log-in and select a supermarket voucher for each child. As of next week, Aldi have also signed up to the scheme which is a real bonus for those who live close to New Park. These vouchers are only available to those who are eligible for Free School Meals. Please follow this link to find out more and complete the form if you think you qualify. <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/free-school-meals>

We are continuing to arrange food parcels and deliveries to families in dire need – please email admin@newparkacademy.co.uk or ring 07464 427 142 to request a parcel.

School reopening

Unfortunately there has been a lot of misleading and antagonistic information spread in the news recently. New Park remains open for vulnerable children and children of key workers who cannot keep their children at home safely. There is currently no set date for when and how schools will reopen. As soon as we know more, I will write to you all to explain what measures we will be taking to ensure school is as safe as possible.

Home learning

As well as the tasks that class teachers continue to design, we have added further links to our learning at home page on the school website. Please remember that each household is trying to juggle different circumstances and each day will often be different to the next. Try to do some maths (Instant Recall Facts or Times Table Rock Stars) and reading each day but the most important thing is to keep your children safe at home and spend as much time with them as you are able.

- **Phonics**
 - For children in Nursery, Reception and KS1 you can find daily Read Write Inc. phonics lessons on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo7fbLgY2oA_cFClg9GdxtQ?safe=true
- **BBC Bitesize**
 - During school closure the BBC are providing daily lessons and resources on their Bitesize revision pages. Every day there are three lessons available for each year group. The lessons start with a video and then have tasks and activities for the children to complete. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>
- **Oak National Academy**
 - Oak National Academy is a new collection of high-quality lessons and online resources. Backed by the Government, it has been created in response to the coronavirus lockdown. The online classroom is completely free and includes video lessons, quizzes and worksheets for primary and secondary. <https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom/schedule>
- **Audiobooks**
 - Reading at home with your children remains one of the best things you can do to support their learning. Why not encourage them to listen to an audiobook too! Audible have made all their children's audiobooks free - they can be found at <https://stories.audible.com/discovery>

New Starters

Even in the midst of all this uncertainty we had fantastic news last week when 30 children accepted a place at New Park for September. This is more than double the number of children we had only two years ago which goes to show how popular our brilliant school is becoming! We can't wait to meet our new starters and will be in touch with parents to arrange virtual home-visits later this term.

It is important for all of us to look after our own mental health during this time. Every Mind Matters has excellent advice on their website <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips>

With my very best wishes,

Mr Mold