

14th January 2021

SPRING 1 TERM

A WORD FROM MRS CALLAGHAN...

Happy New Year! And what a start to the new year and the new term! I apologise in advance for what is inevitably a long newsletter! I would like to begin by saying thank you to you all for your patience and understanding regarding the sudden and unexpected move to remote learning for most of our children. I am very aware of the extra burden that remote learning places on you as parents and carers, at what is already a difficult time for many. We will do our very best to support you during this time. It has also been an extremely challenging time in school as staff have rapidly replanned the learning, got to grips with new ways of working and, in many cases, made childcare arrangements for their own children to enable them to be in school. I am very grateful to the staff for their dedication and hard work. Please do bear with us as we develop our remote curriculum further - there are bound to be some 'teething problems' as we rely on technology (and a sometimes temperamental internet connection!) to deliver lessons and send resources.

Remote Learning

It has been lovely to see all of the children via Zoom every day and I am extremely pleased with the response to and engagement with the remote learning so far. The vast majority of our children have 'attended' the daily Zoom sessions with the class teachers and we are receiving lots of high-quality work on a daily basis. The class teachers and I will review all the work you send in and will be marking or assessing a piece of work from every child every day. Children will receive regular feedback on this work, with suggestions on how to improve it or support to help them understand tasks if they are having difficulty. This feedback might be written in an email or by a recorded voice memo or notes added to a piece of work. Please do share this feedback with children as it is an important part of the teaching and learning process. If you are having days where you are finding it difficult to fit in all of the 'lessons' at home, I would suggest that you focus on English, Maths and phonics or spelling as these are the essentials of our curriculum.

I am also aware that some families are occasionally having their own difficulties with technology. We can lend out school devices (iPads or laptops) if you are struggling. Also, the government is offering parents access to free 4G internet where adequate broadband is not available. Please contact school if you need help with these issues. Copies of worksheets can also be made available if you are having technical problems printing or accessing resources.

PLANNED DIARY DATES (Events may be subject to change due to Covid 19)

FEBRUARY

Mon 15th-Fri 19th - Half Term
Mon 22nd - Term starts

MARCH

Mon 29th-Fri 9th April - Easter Break

APRIL

Monday 12th Staff training day
Tuesday 13th Term starts
Weds 14th-Fri 16th - Peat Rigg Residential: Oak Trees class (Years 3-6)
Weds 21st - Interschool football tournament

COVID Risk Assessment

The latest guidance received from North Yorkshire County Council is that **all visitors to the site** should wear a mask (unless medically exempt). If you do need to visit the school site, please wear a mask to protect our staff and pupils (this includes the playground).

As the COVID-19 situation continues, a reminder that staff, children or parents experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) must **not** come to school, should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

We can still provide a test if you have difficulty accessing one. In the event of one member of a household experiencing symptoms or testing positive, the whole household would need to self-isolate. During this time, we ask that you **continue to notify school of suspected symptoms and/ or positive tests for COVID** even whilst children are learning remotely, as we are required to report on this daily to the Department for Education.

The Importance of Reading during Lockdown

Reading is at the centre of our curriculum and we are very keen to ensure that children's opportunities to read are not restricted during this time. To support you with this, we will be holding a socially-distanced Book Swap on Tuesday 19th January (more details below). You can return finished books and collect new books for children to read. We hope to hold a similar Book Swap every two weeks until we reopen. I am also pleased to announce that we have invested in a new E-Library system that will enable you to download appropriate reading books, allocated by the class teachers, that are matched to children's needs and reading ability. This should be up and running next week and I will send more details then. It is an exciting development for the school and one that will continue to enhance our reading curriculum in the future, regardless of whether school is open or 'closed'!

Critical Worker and Vulnerable Children places in school

As I'm sure you are aware, school continues to be open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The latest Government guidance is that "Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can." Children allocated a place in school are following the same lessons and curriculum as provided in our remote education. Acorns Nursery continues to be open as normal, for parents who wish to send their children at this time.

New Website

You may have noticed some changes to our school website design. It will hopefully be much easier to use and more attractive to look at! Please bear with us as we update the information on it (as unfortunately not all of the previous content has been transferred correctly). We intend to have this completed in the next couple of weeks.

Finally, thank you again for your incredible support, patience and understanding in these challenging times. We appreciate all your kind words and will continue to do whatever we can to provide the best possible education for the children of Leavening because, quite simply, they deserve it!

As always, my very best wishes
Mrs Louise Callaghan (Acting Headteacher)

BOOK SWAP INFORMATION

Reading books can be returned and collected from school on Tuesday 19th January at the following times (to allow for social distancing):

Families with surname beginning A-G: 1pm-1.30pm

Families with surname beginning H-M and T-Z: 1.30pm-2pm

Families with surname beginning N-S: 2pm-2.30pm

Books being returned will be quarantined for 72 hours.

