

NEWSLETTER Monday 18th May 2020

As we enter Week 9 of Lockdown this really does seem like the new normal even though some restrictions were slightly eased by the Government last week.

I am sure you are all aware of the latest plans announced by the prime minister for schools. There has been much discussion and questioning around these plans to start to reopen schools from 1st June; especially the choice of Year groups, EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6. We, the Leadership group of the schools, Mr Lamb, Mr Garvey, the Governors and myself have given this much thought in trying to make it work for both our two schools. By far the most important consideration is that of being able to keep all children, and staff as safe as we possibly can. All schools are unique and given the size of our classrooms and the need of the youngest children to move around it is particularly difficult to develop a plan for reopening for these three year groups, which maintains a good social distancing policy.

The children of Key Workers, irrespective of their year group, will be able continue to come into school for our child care service as they have done since March 23rd.

Having considered everything carefully, from June 1st, Eythorne Elvington school will re-open; **we will only be able to offer a full time return to children in Year R and Year 1 at both schools.** Unfortunately we will not be able to accommodate Year 6 at the moment, on safety grounds. A separate letter is being sent to Year 6 parents to explain this in more detail. We will be aiming within each of the two returning classes, EYFS and Y1, to create small groups in separate classrooms in order to be able to maintain 2 metres social distance between the children and the staff. In addition, at both schools, we have teachers and TAs who cannot come into school due to “shielding” and being advised to work from home. We therefore have to plan, taking into account all of these factors. The Government is clear that they do not expect the classes to come in on a rotational basis but expect the children to be back fulltime possibly with staggered starting and finishing times in order to assist with social distancing. Our priority, according to the guidance we have received has to be the youngest children EYFS and Year 1. We will then see how we can accommodate Year 6 at a later date.

Alongside the newsletter is an information sheet for parents of EYFS,1 and Y6 asking that you let us know your intentions concerning your child returning to school from June 1st (or at a later date for Y6). **Please do email this back to us, with your thoughts, as soon as possible and by midday on Wednesday 20th May at the latest.**

During this next Phase beginning on June 1st, Parents of Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5 and at present Y6 will continue to receive the Home Learning from your child’s class teacher as you have been doing from the start.

I hope you are still able to access the home learning for your child without any difficulties and that your child is still engaging with it as much as is possible. If you have any queries please email your child’s class teacher.

Eythorne and Elvington parents, I hope that you and your children enjoyed the special treat on the home learning page last week. The staff really enjoyed putting this short video message together, showing you all how much we are missing you during these unusual times. I think we also enjoyed seeing the other staff members through watching the video, many of whom we haven't seen since March 20th.

I spoke to many Year 5 parents during phone consultation meetings last week concerning the process of Secondary school transfer. If any Year 5 parent has not contacted me and still wishes to have a discussion with me about this, please ring Sibertswold (01304 830312) for a telephone appointment or send me an e mail.

Sibertswold continues to be open for the children of Key Workers from both our schools. Our numbers were slightly up last week. Please let us know with as much notice as you can when your child will be needing a place. **Please also remember that we will still be open for Key Workers children during the Spring Bank Holiday week Tuesday 26th – Friday 29th May but there will be no Home Learning during that week so you can enjoy the week as a holiday.**

Mrs Bird

Here is this week's poem .

Look for the blossom

The blossom will always grow.
The seasons will always change.
People come and go,
Their shadows comforting and strange.

The flowers will always bloom
Once the darkness subsides.
When every corner is filled with gloom,
Remember the sun just hides.

Brighter days will follow.
Earth will keep moving.
Look for the brighter colour.
Help lift the darkness looming.

Breathe in the air around us.
Close your eyes for a minute's rest.
Live life for those who guided us,
For this moment is just a test.

You will get stronger.
Days will get longer.

Hope will flourish,
Memories to cherish.

We are now in the last week before the May Spring Bank Holiday week, as it was in normal times. I hope you make the most of the sunshine and have some enjoyable moments.

I invite you to share our prayer for the week with your children.

Dear Father God
You travelled through towns and villages
“curing every disease and illness.”
At your command the sick were made well again.
Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of this virus,
that we may experience your healing love.
Lord, healer of all,
Stay by our side in this time of uncertainty
and give us your peace.
Amen