Monday 20th April 2020

Dear Parent carers,

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well. Ordinarily I would be welcoming you back after a holiday and looking forward to the start of a new term, but sadly, that is not the case at the minute. Although on a positive note, I am just incredibly grateful and relieved to know that you are all well and healthy.

In a bid to keep you updated, you may be aware that yesterday, during the Government’s daily press briefing, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson stated that as it stands they can give **no date** as to when schools will be ‘back open as normal’. This is despite fake letters and unsubstantiated stories in the newspapers! I for one, and I also speak on behalf of our staff, would rather that this remained a considered and measured approach in order to ensure that our pupils, not just ours but every pupil in the country, are only brought back into a close school environment when it’s absolutely safe to do so.

You are aware that we are open to a few pupils at the moment and although this is working well, it brings with it a daily pressure and anxiety of ‘what if’ someone becomes symptomatic, as up until this point, they haven’t! So only when it is considered safe will we be open to more pupils. I fully appreciate your desire for your child to be back within their usual routine of school, we are completely with you on this, from a professional as well as personal angle, as a lot of us are parents too, but we can only do what is directed and considered safe within our setting. Continued good health and safety for all must be our priority, and for the vast majority, that is within the home, with limited mixing and interaction.

Due to there not being a potential re-open date, there have been some developments with online learning platforms. The phase leaders will be in touch this week as to how this will impact on your child and how you can access this. I have copied and pasted from the Secondary letter to give you the information on two sites:

The first is The Oak National Academy. This is a totally new initiative, led by teachers who have assembled video lessons and resources.

<https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom>

BBC Bitesize Daily Lessons - The BBC has developed resources for families as part of the most comprehensive education package in their history, available on TV and online.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>

Please have a look at these sites. I will continue to share ideas for activities and learning opportunities via Twitter.

We have continued to enjoy seeing and hearing what the children have been up to in their time away from school. The photos and tweets keep us going and gives us that sense of contact with the pupils that we are all desperately missing!

The Wednesday wave that we did last week made us smile so much so I am thinking of doing this again this week if more of you want to get involved.

Our PE team have now started a PE page on Twitter where they complete challenges and we encourage children to get involved with these too for a bit of fun and fitness. Our page is @HschPE. We are also part of the All Active Academy where we combine with other schools in the local area for sports and PE. Yesterday the All Active Academy launched their #StayInWorkOut initiative. This has specific challenges for different age groups, so something else fun and active to do together. Please take photos if you take part so we can share on Twitter for you. We are offering certificates and prizes as a school for you joining in.

I’d like to thank you for returning your parent questionnaires. These have been really beneficial in finding out how things are going and in order for us to complete the work for the Local Authority. We have completed 110 up until today so a huge thank you! The team will be phoning round those outstanding as we need to have all this information from every single one of our parents. Thank you for your co-operation and the kind comments we are receiving; I have shared these with the staff.

The team will continue with welfare calls but please know that you can contact us whenever you need. Our work numbers are:

Tracey Smith Head teacher 07935223378

Sam Hayward Deputy Head teacher 07935223374

Shelley Hughes Assistant Head – Primary 07716 642824

Ben Homer Assistant Head – Secondary 07922425004

There have been a few teething issues with the FSM vouchers. We are onto this and hopefully will be sorted by tomorrow. Please just let me know though if you are still struggling and we will endeavour to do all we can to solve this.

Please keep us updated if anything changes with your health or circumstances. We are all still here for you all and are still working. It’s not a problem to get in touch with myself, Sam, Shelley or Ben, or the phase leads via their email addresses:

Shelley Hughes primary@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk

Rebecca Harrision chestnutcentre@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk

Kelly Ferran Keystage3@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk

Ben Homer keystage4@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk

Rhian Smith post16@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk

We would much rather answer any queries, questions, concerns and need for extra work/ideas/resources, than find out you are struggling or finding things difficult and we don’t know.

I can’t stress enough that we are not expecting you to be teachers. That’s our job. What we would like is that you are able to spend time with your child, making them feel safe and secure and comfortable in this crazy period of time. If they want to do activities and the structure helps, then great. If they want to do practical life skills, fantastic! It will prepare them for future work in the life skills village, and then in the outside world. If they don’t want to work at home because ‘home is home’ and ‘school is school’, we completely understand this. Just let us know if this is making things difficult in the home and we can offer some strategies and support.

Please, more than anything, know that you are not alone in this.

Please keep safe, keep well, keep smiling and keep going, you are all amazing and you’ve got this!

Take care

Tracey & Team Rigby