

1<sup>st</sup> July 2020



# July Newsletter

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that all of you and your families are well and dealing with the ongoing situation with determination and courage. I have incorporated the July newsletter into this letter, as there is quite a lot of information, which I wanted you to have regarding schools, the Coronavirus pandemic and how we are planning to move forward as a school. Unfortunately, I do not have all the answers to the many questions still arising but this should give you an outline of all the information we have to date.

We have been very successful at welcoming many of our children, from the government priority groups, back into school from 1<sup>st</sup> June. It was very pleasing to read that we are above average attendance for state primary schools across the country. We are recording 38% of our school population in school, whereas the country average is 24% (*data from government statistics on 25<sup>th</sup> June*). Thank you for all the parental support that has enabled this to happen.

## **Funding announcement**

The government announced, on 19<sup>th</sup> June, new catch up funding for schools:

### ***'New catch up funding***

*Today, we have announced a £1 billion catch-up package to support pupils who may have fallen behind due to lost teaching time as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This package includes:*

- › a one-off grant shared across state funded primary and secondary schools over the 2020/21 academic year to support pupils, recognising that all young people have lost time in education as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, regardless of their income or background.*
- › a National Tutoring Programme to increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the 2020/21 academic year.'*

Any funding coming into school to support our children is very welcome. We are looking forward to receiving this money and further details of how we are able to use this money in school.

### **FSM Vouchers**

We are delighted that the government has announced that the FSM (Free School Meal) voucher scheme will continue over the summer break. If you are one of our families who use this service you do not need to anything – we will organise this for you.

### **Reports**

As I mentioned in June's newsletter, reports will look different this year. A letter reminding you of these changes will accompany the report. We will be posting your child's report in the next few weeks and you should receive it by Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July. *Please note: this is dependent on the postal service and so we cannot guarantee the exact arrival date.*

### **Moving on/new classes**

We would normally be announcing a 'Moving On' day for all the children so that they will be able to spend an hour in their new class. Unfortunately, this cannot happen this year but we are looking at alternatives and will update you when we have found a different solution.

### **Books at the end of the year**

The children usually bring their main learning books home at the end of the year. This year, we will hold onto these until we are able to send them home with your child. Year 6 will be the only year group who will receive their books, as they will be leaving Whitewater. Mr Grinham will be organising this.

### **Alternative Sports Day**

One of the events that we will not be able to share together this year is Sports Day. Instead, we will be holding a Whitewater CofE Primary School Sports Week, next week. All the children in school will be taking part and we would love it if all of you at home could join in. Full details of how to participate will be sent to all our families later this week.

### **Summer Holidays**

The summer holiday break is not too far away. We have received information from the government that schools will be closed over the summer, even for our Key workers, so our teachers will also be able to enjoy a well-earned break! I hope that you will be able to spend some time as a family, either as a staycation or perhaps venturing abroad with no Home Learning.

### **September: Back to school**

We are currently waiting for the official decision and government guidelines regarding September but there is every indication that the government will expect every child to be back in school. This would be a great relief to many of you who have coped with many



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months of Home Learning and all of the staff at Whitewater are excited about this prospect. There are many questions about how this will work in practice, particularly in accordance with keeping children and staff safe but when we receive the information, we will pass this on to you.

As a school, we have been discussing and planning a, 'Covid Recovery Plan', carefully considering the children and how to enable them to catch up on the time away from the classroom, during lockdown. Whenever we are back to being fully open with all the children attending, the most important aspect of the plan will be to focus on children's well-being, mental health and getting them 'ready to learn'. This may take several weeks. We might need to support children for longer periods of time as they adjust back into a learning and school routine. The school will be using a range of resources to help in this process including, our Heartsmart and Growth Mindset teaching as well as ELSA (Emotional Learning Support) and a programme compiled by PBS (Primary Behaviour Service), contributors from the EP service (Education Psychology) and North Hampshire Headteachers.

Gradually, the teachers will be reintroducing the core areas of learning: English and Maths, back into their teaching. This will involve increasing the time spent on tasks, focusing on core elements of each area, for example, number work in Maths, and identifying gaps in the child's learning. Teachers are highly skilled at ongoing, daily assessment and will be able to identify gaps quickly and respond to the needs of every child. As a school, we are committed to addressing all the learning needs of our children and want your child to catch up as soon as they are able. However, we are also acutely aware that children will come back to school with many different starting points and your child's ability to engage in learning will determine how quickly they will respond to being back in school. As time continues, we will be working back towards a broader curriculum base with an increase in time on other areas of the curriculum.

To finish; despite the truly devastating impact of the coronavirus, we really do not know what the future will hold during the ongoing pandemic. This will be a marathon recovery journey for the whole school community and it will take time. With commitment from all of us; school, parents and children, I have every confidence that we will get back on track and enable our children to succeed and flourish.

Your support in every capacity has been truly fantastic, thank you.

Yours sincerely

Miss Edwards  
Headteacher