

St John's Upper Holloway CE Primary

October Newsletter 2020

Dear Parents

It has been lovely to see so many children return to school happy to see their friends and new teachers. Despite the long gap that many children had in their learning since lockdown, they all seem to have settled in to the school routines extremely well.

Assessing children's learning

For the last couple of weeks we have been assessing all the children to see what 'gaps' they have in their learning due to the disrupted summer term. We have focused mainly on reading, phonics, writing and maths and teachers will be meeting with myself and Mr Turpin to start to plan additional support for children who need it in the term ahead.

I hope you were all able to meet with your child's teacher this week, either through zoom or by phone, to talk about how they are settling in and to discuss areas that they need to focus on next. Parents have an incredibly important role in helping their children at home with their homework, reading and any other home learning activities and we are always more than happy to talk with you about how you can do this well. ***If you haven't been able to talk with your child's teacher this week, can I ask that you make a time to chat with them in the coming week.***

Covid measures

A huge thank you to all our parents and carers for helping us with the measures we have introduced, including using different entrances at the start and end of the day.

I know it can add time to your day if you have children in different classes so we really appreciate your help. ***Can I just remind you not to walk directly from the playground to the office but to walk around the side of the school and access the office from the front. This is because we have a limit of 2 people in the foyer and need to carefully control this.***

The office sent out some guidance last week about what to do if your child or anyone in your household comes down with covid symptoms. I hope it was helpful but do contact the office if you need them to clarify when you should keep your child off school.

Black History Month

Like many schools, we are focusing on embedding black history throughout our curriculum in order that it celebrates diversity and better reflects our mission to provide a more inclusive education. Although Black History month has helped to high profile the achievement of black men and women in all strands of life, it can all too easily be forgotten for the rest of the year and so we wanted to ensure that it is more effectively woven through all our subjects from literacy to science and history to art. In the coming weeks, each class will be enjoying some aspects of black history such as through class storybooks and we will be sharing our diverse curriculum with you shortly through our website. If you have any ideas for activities that you think would be good to include, please do come and talk with your child's teacher.



Home Learning

As Covid is likely to be with us for some time, we have been looking at how we support children with their learning if they are required to self isolate for 2 weeks due to them or someone in their family testing positive.

If it is an individual pupil who is off school, Islington have produced units of work for english , maths and topic that can be done from home. These can be accessed online or we can print out a paper pack and your child's class teacher will talk with you about how to complete and return them.

If there is a positive case and the whole class bubble are told to remain at home, the teacher will set work via Seesaw for each week, just as they did during lockdown.

You will all be aware, much of the homework that the children do each week is now computer based. The advantage of this is that the programmes used (Doodle maths, English and spell) can link with what the children are doing in class but also track their progress. We have set up a homework club each Monday after school to help those children who struggle to complete their work at home or who limited access to a computer. If you know your child is struggling with any aspect of their homework, please do speak with your child's teacher so we can help to find a solution. Remember, reading is still one of the most important (and enjoyable!) areas of home learning and your child should read each day and you also need to write a brief comment in their reading record about how well they read and what they enjoyed.

Harvest time

Thanks to our summer holiday gardening volunteers, the vegetable gardens were looking great when the children returned in September. We have recently planted more seedlings and hope to be enjoying them over the coming months!

This is also a time when we think about the many people in our community who struggle to buy enough food for themselves and their families. Miss Giles sent a letter out this morning asking parents to send in any **food donations** and we will then pass them on to the Hive Foodbank which is based at St Mary's. We will be celebrating harvest in school on 7th October.



Breakfast and Buzz Club

Just a reminder to parents that we are asking you to book and pay in advance either by phone or by parentmail. Numbers are steadily increasing since the start of term which is encouraging and will hopefully enable us to continue to offer the service for the future.

Have an enjoyable weekend.

Brian Welsh and all the staff at St John's