

HIGHFIELD UPDATE Wednesday 27th January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

On Tuesday I met with the teaching, learning and pupil support sub-committee of the governing body. I shared our remote learning data with the governing body.

Attendance at our 'live' online English and Maths lessons in years 1 – 6 has been outstanding, with 92% of pupils have attended all live lessons. 99.48% of children who are not attending school are accessing our remote learning. In addition, engagement with Seesaw has been remarkable – 12,720 posts from children in the first 3 weeks of term! What a phenomenal effort from the whole school community; so much terrific learning is happening so thank you to everybody and keep going! The governing body is very impressed with the work school is doing and the support from our families. Our mission now is to keep it all going for as long as it takes.

We currently have two members of staff poorly with COVID 19 and we wish them a speedy and full recovery. Our staff are now testing twice a week at home using lateral flow testing kits provided by the government. This means that we can hopefully pick up on any positive asymptomatic staff and break the chain of transmission in school. The number of children in school every day ranges from 75 – 116 depending on our critical worker shift patterns. Once again I thank everyone who is following the government guidance and keeping their children at home whenever they can.

I always try to find the time to pop into some of the live lessons as well as having a look at some of the children's wonderful work on Seesaw. It's so lovely to be able to see the children at home and praise them for their efforts. I have also been incredibly impressed with the work being uploaded onto Seesaw. This week I have read some of the Year 5 refugee reports, the Year 3 Egyptian traditional stories and the Year 1 Three Little Pig sentences. I have also seen the Year 6 reading comprehension work, Year 2 adverb work and Year 4 work on commas. It's great to see how you are managing to upload photographs of the children's work for us to read and give feedback. I am particularly impressed with how many of you are managing to adapt to not having a printer by using paper and pencils and simply copying out any necessary information. I often reflect on the years I spent living and working as a teaching volunteer in schools in The Gambia in West Africa back in the early 1990s. The teachers and parents in the villages where I worked had very little in the way of resources but because they valued education they always found a way to learn. Many of the children studied using a candle at night. The Gambia teachers used cardboard boxes to make books, bottle tops as counters and used plant to make paint. I was so impressed by their resourcefulness and remember a conversation I had one day with a very wise old man who had been a teacher. He told me that learning is about the relationship between a teacher and a child and that it doesn't matter where you are or what you have as long as you have that relationship. I found out later that he had taught a boy who went on to become a veterinarian and then the president of The Gambia.

There is of course lots of uncertainty about when schools will be able to fully open again. Sometimes worrying about things beyond our control doesn't do us any good at all. My message to the staff this week has been to just keep going with exactly what we are doing and so that is my message to you too. Remember it isn't easy, you didn't choose to home school your children but you are doing a fabulous job and you are helping keep us all safe from the virus.

We can do this!

Best wishes

Julie Colley