



The Southwater Infant Academy

“Growing, Learning and Succeeding Together”

26th June 2020

Dear Families,

I am sure that, like me, you will be feeling a sense of relief that there are signs of a return to some semblance of normality ahead. The past three months have been challenging for all of us in many ways, and the full impact of lockdown on our children will likely not be seen for some time. While we are incredibly pleased at the academy to have many Reception and key worker children now attending, we feel an increasing sense of frustration about all the children who are still not able to return due to the restrictions placed on us. We are looking forward to September with hope that we will be able to welcome all families back, and that we will be able to get back to doing what we enjoy and love most - nurturing and teaching our children.

I would again like to thank all our families for their continued support over the past three months. We are very grateful for the understanding shown towards us, and the words of encouragement we have received. Over the coming days we will be preparing for the end of term, both in school for children who can be here and virtually for those who can't. More details about this are below.

Current Arrangements

I'm sure you will all be aware that the social distancing rules are changing, and that schools have been encouraged to take more children if they are able to. For some schools this has enabled them to open to more children as they were maintaining greater distances between each child, and bubble numbers were low. The majority of schools will be unable to open to any more children however, as the cap of 15 children in each bubble still remains. At the infants we have bubbles in every classroom, and being taught by every available teacher. The only way that we could take more children into the academy would be by breaching the cap of 15 children, which we are unable to do under the guidelines we have been given by the DfE. We understand the frustration felt by many of our families about this, however please remember that these guidelines have been provided by the DfE to keep the children and staff attending schools safe.

Teachers are continuing to provide home learning via Tapestry. Activities are prepared for each week, and teachers will continue to respond or feedback to children where tasks or photos are uploaded. Please remember that, as all teachers are now in school teaching during the week, comments and feedback may not be possible until the end of the week. If you have any urgent questions, concerns or messages, please contact us at the academy office by phone or email.

New Classes

The very exciting news about new classes will be arriving with you by the end of next week. Letters will be sent out to children currently attending the academy, and for any children starting Reception in September, you should have already received the information about your child's class.

Transition

Teachers have started preparing transition activities for the children. More details of these will be sent out with the letter about new classes next week. We would encourage as many families as are able to participate with the transition work as it is hugely beneficial in preparing the children for the move to their new class. We will aim to avoid the use of sheets that need printers, and children will be able to share their responses in a way that suits you best.

Reports

Teachers are finishing their annual reports for children this week, and after checking and proof reading we will be sending these to you in the week beginning the 6th July. Due to the cancellation of all national tests and assessments for children this year, the government has removed the requirement for schools to report on achievement of expectations. The requirement to report on attendance has also been removed for obvious reasons! Like all other schools, teachers have faced the challenge of writing reports for children who have been out of the academy for some time, and who they may not have seen for a number of months now. As such, the reports will take a different format this year, and will be reduced in content. Teachers will provide an overview of where children were working before lockdown, and where relevant will comment on any home learning that has been shared. For some of our families there will have been no opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the class teacher since the autumn term. We hope that the reports will provide you with a clear picture of where your child was working at the start of lockdown, however if you feel that you wish to discuss your child's report or progress with the class teacher, we will be providing details about how to arrange that when we send out the reports.

September

The government has announced its intention that schools will open fully in September for all year groups. For this to happen, there is obviously a change needed in the current guidance provided to schools. We anticipate that new guidance will be received next week, possibly on the 1st July, which will provide schools with the information and detail they need to plan for a September opening. While I know many of our families are keen to hear about plans for September and key dates that you may need to know, we are reluctant to plan too far ahead before receiving this guidance. Once we have been provided with the detail we need, we will be able to start planning for what a return to school in September will look like. We will, of course, share this with you as soon as we are able to.

Mobile Classrooms

Many of our families will know that we were due to have our existing mobile classrooms replaced during the summer holidays this year. Due to Covid-19 there have been some significant delays to this project unfortunately. We have been liaising with West Sussex throughout the lockdown period, and have been advised that works for the replacement of the units will hopefully begin on the 20th July. It will not now be possible to have the work completed by the end of the summer holiday, and a new estimated completion date of the end of October has been put forward. Whilst the works are in progress, temporary mobile classrooms will be provided for the children to ensure they have a safe, suitable learning environment. We are currently planning for these to be located on the joint academies field. If your child is in Ladybird and Willow classes next year, they will be located in the mobile classrooms. This will mean that your child will be in the temporary unit for a short while in the autumn term, and will move into their permanent classroom once the building works are complete. I appreciate that this will result in some disruption through moving the location of their learning space, and this is not something we would have planned to do. It is unfortunately other consequence of Covid-19 that is unavoidable. We will ensure that the wellbeing and safety of the children have priority throughout, and that the move between classrooms is managed in a well prepared and positive manner.

Key Dates

Please note that the last day of term for our Reception children will be Thursday 16th July. The last day of term for our key worker children will be Friday 17th July.

Safeguarding

Please can we remind all our families of the importance of monitoring your child when they are using the internet or a mobile device. In these busy times of juggling work, home schooling and childcare, it is easy to lose sight of what children are accessing. Many internet sites, such as Youtube, enable children to access very adult content quite easily. We would always recommend only using Youtube where an adult is present to monitor the viewing, and ensuring that age ratings for games are taken into consideration before allowing your child to play them. If you have any questions or concerns about online safety please do get in touch.

The DfE have produced guidance to support parents in keeping children safe online. This can be found using the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online>

Yours sincerely



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