



Halebank C of E Primary School  
Heathview Road  
WIDNES  
Cheshire  
WA8 8UZ



Headteacher: Mr R Harley

Telephone number: 0151 425 5798

Thursday, 2nd April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

It's nearly two weeks since I last wrote to you and it now feels like an awfully long time ago that we were all in school together. I hope that you are all keeping yourselves busy and that everyone is in good health. As we approach the end of the second week of official school closures, there are a few items that I would like to draw your attention to.

### **Launch of Voucher Scheme for Schools Providing Free School Meals**

Earlier in the week, the government announced a national voucher scheme to enable pupils who would usually receive free school meals to continue to access meals while schools are closed. While we did offer you the option of collecting packed lunches from school if your child is eligible, the take up of this has been extremely low.

The new voucher scheme is only available during term time so we will look to have this up and running for eligible families during the week beginning Monday, 20th April. If your child is currently in receipt of free school meals, the school will complete the registration process and once this has been done, you will be emailed an 'eCode' to enable you to access your vouchers electronically. Mrs Fenlon has already sent out a text reminder asking you for your current email address. Please respond to this text as soon as you can to enable us to get you set up for the voucher scheme. Once received, the vouchers can be spent on food at a range of shops including Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons and M&S. The Department for Education is working to get more shops to join the scheme as soon as possible. The press release relating to the voucher scheme can be found [here](#).

Please note that the scheme supports families whose children receive benefit/income-related free school meals (not the universal infant free school meals that all pupils in Classes 1 and 2 have each day). If you are unsure about whether your child is eligible for free school meals, please have a look at the information on [Halton Borough Council's website](#). While the voucher scheme is being set up, daily packed lunches can still be ordered and collected from the school kitchen. Please email Mrs Fenlon if you would like to arrange this provision for your child.

### **Childcare Provision**

The school's childcare facility will continue to run throughout the Easter break for pupils whose parents are 'key workers' and for vulnerable children. If you are using the service, please continue to confirm your child's attendance by 5.00 pm the day before by emailing me and Mrs Fenlon at [head.halebank@halton.gov.uk](mailto:head.halebank@halton.gov.uk) and [sec.halebank@halton.gov.uk](mailto:sec.halebank@halton.gov.uk). Thank you.

## Good Friday and Easter Monday

The general consensus across schools in Halton is that settings will try to stay open for the children of key workers on Good Friday and Easter Monday where this is possible. In order to allow our staff some time with their own families over the Easter weekend, I would be grateful if you could inform Mrs Fenlon as soon as possible if your work is 'critical to the COVID-19 response' and you require childcare on the bank holidays.

## Contacting School Staff

If you need to make contact with your child's class teacher about the work that is being set or for any learning-based queries, please continue to use the following class email addresses:

Mrs Griffin-Jones: [Class1@halebank.halton.sch.uk](mailto:Class1@halebank.halton.sch.uk)

Mrs Draper: [Class2@halebank.halton.sch.uk](mailto:Class2@halebank.halton.sch.uk)

Mrs Eley: [Class3@halebank.halton.sch.uk](mailto:Class3@halebank.halton.sch.uk)

Mrs Bennett: [Class4@halebank.halton.sch.uk](mailto:Class4@halebank.halton.sch.uk)

## Easter Holidays: Ideas and Activities

The staff have posted a new overview which includes learning ideas and activities for the Easter break; please check your child's class page on the school website for further information. Weekly overviews will then be posted every **Monday** from 20<sup>th</sup> April with a new 5 day programme of learning for your child to work through.


## Tips to Support Home Learning

Do have a look at the guidance for parents on the [newsletters page](#) on our website for some useful tips regarding 'home schooling' or have a read of this article on the BBC website: [Coronavirus: So how did day one of homeschooling go?](#) Remember you are not alone in any challenges you are facing with this; making your child's learning fun, while also keeping them motivated is no mean feat. Routines and structure are important features of the school day but do be realistic about what you hope to achieve in a day. If it's not working, it's probably time for a break! I think most (if not all) of our staff would agree that teaching your children in school is an easier job than working with their own at home!

I hope this newsletter has provided you with some useful information and I will write again when there is more news. It is still very difficult to look too far ahead and we know that as a country the next couple of weeks are likely to be very challenging for many families up and down the UK. The families of Halebank are very much in our thoughts and prayers. As a staff, we are missing being together as a full team and we are certainly missing working with you and your children.

Take care of yourselves and I hope to see you again soon.

Yours sincerely



Mr R Harley