

Wednesday, 22nd April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Update on School Closure

I hope that you are well and that you and your families are in good health. We now know that schools will remain closed for (at least) the next two and a half weeks. In his speech at the weekend, the government's Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, confirmed that schools would only reopen once it was safe to do so and that he was not yet in a position to confirm a date when this would happen.

For the Children of Halebank: A Video Message from the Staff



Thank you so much for the positive response to the staff's video message to the children of the school which was posted earlier in the week. It goes without saying that we are missing you and the children terribly. The staff put together their clips and photos over the Easter break and I hope you enjoyed seeing what they were up to. In case you haven't yet seen the video message, please click [here](#) to have a look. Please share the video with others if you think they might have missed it!

Learning at Home

The staff are aware that learning at home with your child is not an easy task! We are grateful to you for all the effort that has gone in so far to support your child's learning during the school closure. We also understand that there are lots of resources on our class pages on the school website and that some of you have found this overwhelming. With this in mind, the teachers will slim down the activities for you and your child to complete together at home from next week. Please remember that there is no set amount of time that your child should be 'working' and you may well have your own activities that you wish to complete at home.

Please have a look on our website at the [advice and model timetable](#) that was provided by HBC's Behaviour Support Service when schools were first closed last month. You may find the timetable helpful with the organisation of your child's day; timings and activities are for guidance only and do not need to be adhered to rigidly. However, routine is also very important to children and we find in school that set times for activities, where children know what is coming and when, helps to maintain motivation and reduce anxiety.

The situation we are currently in is exceptional, so please don't worry that you're not doing enough with your child at home. Many of the staff have their own children at home and no one is finding the situation easy! When the children do return to

school, it will be our job to help get them 'back on track' and the closure of schools provides a chance to follow your child's lead, rather than completing hours of formal study. Click [here](#) to read an article on the importance of play at home; it might help you to see 'home schooling' in a different way.



If you continue to have any worries about home learning, please contact your child's class teacher using the following email addresses:

Mrs Griffin-Jones: Class1@halebank.halton.sch.uk

Mrs Draper: Class2@halebank.halton.sch.uk

Mrs Eley: Class3@halebank.halton.sch.uk

Mrs Bennett: Class4@halebank.halton.sch.uk

You and your child may wish to let the teachers know how you're getting on at home, so do make contact; the staff would love to hear from you!

Voucher Scheme for Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals

After some teething problems, the Edenred system now appears to be up and running. Parents and carers of pupils eligible for free school meals should have received their second wave of vouchers. I will order these on a fortnightly basis now, so the next voucher codes should reach you some time during the week beginning 27th April; fortnightly codes will be for £30 per child (the weekly allowance is £15). There are still some unredeemed codes in the system, so please check your emails as they are only valid for four weeks.

If you have any problems with the system or if you are waiting for vouchers, please contact me at head.halebank@halton.gov.uk and I will look into this for you.

Aldi has now confirmed that it has signed up to the voucher scheme; other supermarkets included are Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Waitrose and M&S. The Department for Education is continuing to work to get more shops to join the scheme.

Childcare Provision

The school's childcare facility continues to run for pupils whose parents are 'key workers' and for vulnerable children. If you are using the service, please confirm your child's attendance the day before by emailing me and Mrs Fenlon at head.halebank@halton.gov.uk and sec.halebank@halton.gov.uk. It is vital that we receive this information on a **daily basis, no later than 5.00 pm**, in order to arrange staffing in school. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

I would like you to know that the families of Halebank are still very much in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. Please stay safe and look after yourselves.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Harley