



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



Headteacher: Mr R Harley

Telephone number: 0151 425 5798

Thursday, 7th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. A great deal has changed since I last wrote to you on Monday and we find ourselves in another challenging and uncertain period of time. The school is now closed to most pupils and there are some important messages to share with you in these first few days of remote learning.

Critical Workers and Vulnerable Pupils

Despite the school being closed to the majority of pupils, the government still expects a small number of children to be provided with access to school during the current 'lockdown'. The guidance we have been given states that parents whose children may be able to access school are those 'whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response'. This includes those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors including education and childcare, key public services, and local and national government. Pupils identified as 'vulnerable' by the Local Authority or the school, may also be provided with access to school.

There is a clear '[stay at home](#)' message for us all, as there was in March last year. This time around, though, we have seen more requests for access to the school's childcare facility. This is concerning me and the staff as we are at risk of becoming overwhelmed by the number of pupils attending. With a more infectious strain of the virus now in circulation and a dramatic increase in the number of positive test cases in Halton, our contact with one another needs to be minimised. In March, we typically had around 10% of the children in school; this has already increased to 25%, with more requests still being made. Should this continue to rise further, the school will need to prioritise pupils in order to reduce the numbers attending school; it would be preferable if parents could make adjustments themselves by only requesting childcare for the days they need in order to fulfil their 'critical' working commitments. If you are able to work from home, your children are best placed to be there with you, rather than in school where they are mixing with others.

The rationale behind school closures is to reduce transmission and this will only be achieved if we minimise contact with one another. As a school, we are now needing at least half of the staff team in school to support supervision. This leaves our staff in a vulnerable position as they are having contact with others in school, then mixing with family members in their homes. As I'm sure you can appreciate, I have a duty of care to the staff in school to ensure that they feel safe and supported in their place of work.

For the reasons I have outlined, I would urge you to keep your children at home unless your working commitments are 'critical' and there are no other options available to

you. For example, if one parent is a 'critical worker' but the other is at home, your child should not need to use our childcare provision.

You may be concerned that your child will be 'missing out' if they are not in school, and in normal circumstances, this would certainly be true. However, at this time, this is not the case. The focus of our class teachers now is providing remote learning; pupils who have to stay in school will have access to the same curriculum as that which is being provided at home.

Home Learning

We know from the last lockdown that there were challenges when the children were learning at home. Please be realistic about what you hope to achieve each day and don't expect things to be perfect. Staff know that supporting the children at home is not easy and they understand the difficulties the current restrictions will be creating within your homes.

Nevertheless, there is an expectation that schools will provide high quality remote learning provision and the teachers are working extremely hard to offer this to the children. Now that you have received your home learning packs, your child should be logging into the [Learning Platform](#) each day. The teachers will provide videos to support home learning and they will offer feedback on the work they receive. When I spoke to the class teachers via Zoom this morning, they were delighted that so many children were engaging with the activities that had been set on Day 1.

Class	Year Group/s	Class Teacher/s	Email Address
Class 1	Reception	Mrs Power	class1@halebank.halton.sch.uk
Class 2	Year 1/2	Mrs Draper	class2@halebank.halton.sch.uk
Class 3	Year 3/4	Mrs Eley/Mrs Griffin-Jones	class3@halebank.halton.sch.uk
Class 4	Year 5/6	Mrs Bennett	class4@halebank.halton.sch.uk

Following feedback from the teachers, I would like to share a few points with you which may help the remote learning experience run smoothly:

- The teachers are not currently working in school so cannot be contacted via the school office. If you need to raise a concern, please do this by using the class email addresses above.
- Use the 'Upload your homework' box to send your work to the teachers; this will ensure that feedback can be given. If work is posted at the bottom of the page for others to see, individual feedback cannot be offered.
- Please avoid emailing the teachers to check that work has been successfully uploaded; should your child's work not arrive, teachers will be in touch at a later date.
- Please be mindful of the workload of our teachers; this is a new way of working which is very time-consuming. Teachers are creating videos and resources, posting activities, responding to emails and queries, AND providing feedback on three activities for each child in the class!
- Our teachers will not be able to respond immediately to any requests for help and I am encouraging them to check their emails and home learning within their usual working hours.
- When the red 'Report something to a teacher' banner at the top of your child's homepage is used, this sends an alert to me, the school office and the class

teacher. This button should only be used to report any concerns about the content of a post by another pupil, not to ask the staff a question about work.

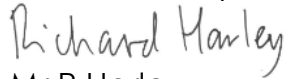
Thank You

I think we are all feeling a little out of sorts and this is certainly not the start to the term we were all hoping for. However, I know that we all belong to a wonderful school community, the Halebank 'family', and we are used to working together to bring out the best in one another. I have no doubts that we will work through this week's teething troubles and that we will soon adapt to these changes.

You are very much in our thoughts and prayers, and I thank you for taking the time to read this information. In particular, thank you for re-considering your childcare options and for your continued support with your child's home learning.

Please take good care of yourselves and your families ☺.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Harley".

Mr R Harley
Headteacher