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**Houghton Conquest
Lower School**

Growing together

Headteacher
Miss C A McCarthy

7th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Keeping in touch

I hope this letter finds you all well and you are all staying safe. We are really missing everyone being together at school but know what a brilliant job everyone is doing of keeping learning going at home until we all return.

We recognise that this has been a challenging time for children and their families, and we are looking forward to children returning to school when this can happen safely. The school will be following government guidance, as it is released, to enable this. Should any announcement be made, there is likely to be some decision making and planning at a local level and the school will be working as quickly as possible to make the arrangements and to ensure compliance. Please be assured that, should there be any announcement, we will communicate with you as soon as we can with the relevant information.

Home Learning Packs

Thank you so much for continuing to support your child's learning from home. For some of your children they may be coming to the end of their second home learning pack. If this is the case and you would like a new home learning pack, then please follow the information below. Please remember these are optional and are there to provide support.

However, if you are still continuing with the home learning pack you already have, please continue to do so and you can get in contact with your class teacher if and when you would like to access the new home learning pack resources. We are more than happy to facilitate what is best for you and your family, as I am aware every household has their own demands and we do not wish to add any extra pressure.

If you would like to have an **electronic copy** of the new home learning pack then please email your class teacher direct on the class email address:

- robins@hcschool.org.uk
- doves@hcschool.org.uk
- owls@hcschool.org.uk
- falcons@hcschool.org.uk



If you would like to have a **hard copy** of the home learning pack, please see below the time and date to collect your child's new home learning pack. These will be available from **Tuesday 12th May.**

Collection of Home Learning Packs

We would be thankful for your continued support by collecting your child's home learning pack at the given time as part of your daily exercise, if you wish to. Where possible, please limit the number of people visiting the school to collect home learning packs.

The home learning packs will be labelled and on a table in the designated area (detailed below) for you to collect. This will run across two separate days in case you are unable to get to the school on the first day.

Tuesday 12 th May		
Class	Time of Collection	Location
Robins	Between 9.30am and 12.00pm	School Car Park
Doves	Between 9.30am and 12.00pm	Under the canopy, outside the green gate, where you drop your child off.
Owls	Between 12.30pm and 3.00pm	School Car Park
Falcons	Between 12.30pm and 3.00pm	Under the canopy, outside the green gate, where you drop your child off.

Wednesday 13 th May		
Class	Time of Collection	Location
Robins	Between 12.30pm and 3.00pm	School Car Park
Doves	Between 12.30pm and 3.00pm	Under the canopy, outside the green gate, where you drop your child off.
Owls	Between 9.30am and 12.00pm	School Car Park
Falcons	Between 9.30am and 12.00pm	Under the canopy, outside the green gate, where you drop your child off.

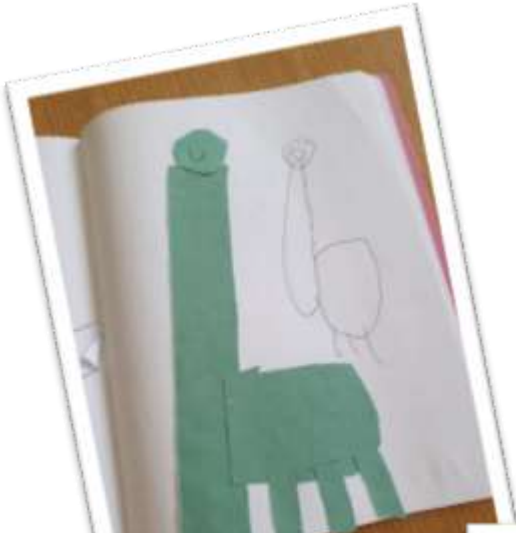
If you have more than one child in the school and in different classes, you will be able to collect multiple packs at the same time. These will be still available to collect in the designated areas above.

Please remember to continue following Government guidelines with regards to social distancing when collecting home learning packs. Please also remember to only collect the pack that is allocated to your child.

If you have been/are currently self-isolating and/or display symptoms, please do not come to collect the home learning pack yourself. We will ensure the home learning pack gets to you as soon as we can.

Home Learning Fun

We have received lots more emails and photos of children learning from home this week. It is amazing to see all the creative ideas that you have been doing with your children. We would like to say a big thank you for continuing your child's learning from home. Please continue to send your class teacher photos and updates, as I will share some of these each week.



Creating a wonderful dinosaur out of shapes!



Having lots of fun making dens out of boxes and creating a beautiful fairy garden.



Creating a brilliant suit of armour!

Keeping busy doing DIY with dad and creating a rainbow cactus garden!



Conducting amazing science experiments!



Creating a volcano!



Getting ready to come back to school

As we prepare ourselves and the children for a return to school soon (*as and when announced by the government*), we have some advice below to help the transition back to school to go as smoothly as possible. To be most effective, we really need to begin this a couple of weeks before coming back.

1. Set up a back-to-school routine

Having consistent bed and wake-up times will help. The National Sleep Foundation suggest starting two weeks before the first day of school to set sleep routine habits. But even a week beforehand will help your child adjust.

The first week back will be difficult, transitioning from being in 'home mode' so don't worry and indeed expect this. Try to maintain healthy habits around sleep (around 9-11 hours for children aged 5-13), exercise (around one hour per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity three times a week) and a healthy diet.

Create structure with a 'school' routine during most weekdays if you can. Be guided by your knowledge of what best supports your child during times of change and transition. For some children, a visual calendar will help 'count down' and know which days are weekends.

You could set up a practical chart for getting ready. You could include:

- What needs to be done each day for school, such as: getting up, eating breakfast, brushing teeth and getting dressed.
- What help does your child need from you to get ready?
- What they can do on their own? (Establish these together).

2. Talk about going back to school

Most children have some level of stress or anxiety about school. You can offer support by normalising experiences of worry and nerves. Reassure your child the feelings they have are totally normal and very common, and they will likely overcome them once they have settled in. Worries and courage can exist together.

Depending on your child's age, you could also try writing a social story about going to school and the routine ahead.

3. Help create a sense of school belonging

A sense of belonging at school can really affect academic success and well-being. Parents can facilitate positive attitudes about school by setting an encouraging tone when talking about it.

4. Look out for signs of stress

Parents can spot stress if their child (depending on age): is more clingy than usual; appears restless and flighty, or cries; shows an increased desire to avoid activities through negotiations and deal-making; tries to get out of going to school; retreats to thumb sucking, 'baby' language, habits they had previously grown out of, or increased attachment to favourite soft toys.

We have all been through a huge ordeal and change to our routines; stress responses are to be expected. However, if these behaviours persist for more than a few weeks, talk to your class teacher about what is happening. Together, we can work on a strategy of support.

5. Encourage questions

Encourage questions children may have about coming back. What will be the same? What will be different? Be open about what we do know and what we do not know yet. Tell your child who they can talk to at school if they have questions. We will all be completing 'Helping Hand' when we get back so that everyone has a 'go to' person who can help.

Also, let your child know, nothing is off limits to talk about. Have in your head some time set aside to talk informally and with low pressure (usually whilst doing something else, like driving somewhere, cooking together etc.) Most importantly, do not over-do it: too much talk can worry children too.

Safeguarding and Communication

Safeguarding is and will always remain a priority for us. If you have anything you wish to discuss, please contact the school line on **01234 740202** or email **office@hcschool.org.uk** and Miss Heaslip will get in touch with you as soon as possible.

To make an immediate referral use the access and referral hub: **0300 300 8585**.

We will be in touch early next week following the guidance given to us over the weekend. We hope you have a wonderful bank holiday weekend – enjoy the lovely weather!

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. Stay safe and take care!

Yours sincerely



Miss J Heaslip
Acting Headteacher