

5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this update letter finds you once again keeping safe and well. Last week the Prime Minister announced that it will not be possible for us to open to all children after the February half-term. Instead, our most up-to-date understanding is that he hopes it will be safe to start to reopen schools in England from the 8<sup>th</sup> March, if the Government's target to vaccinate everyone in the four most vulnerable groups by the 15th February is achieved.



I am conscious of the impact this news would have had on many of you, who are doing so tremendously well with remote education, but finding things difficult nevertheless. Please rest assured that each family, in its own unique circumstances, will continue to have our ongoing support. I will continue to stress our empathy and flexibility in supporting making this right 'for you' and encourage you to speak with us if you need support.

**Parent Survey (for parents of statutory school age children):**

With this in mind, I have been truly delighted with the remote learning offer we have been able to provide and are grateful to all of the teaching team for their support in enabling children's enjoyment and learning to continue during this time. We have had a lot of children engaged fully with our remote learning. I am keen to continue to ensure that children's engagement with remote learning remains high – in order that they can continue to make progress. To ensure I fully understand parental viewpoint, I would be very grateful to all parents for completing this short parent survey by **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February**. This will help inform our plans going forward.



**Link to the survey:** <https://forms.gle/hxviwvBtcrSfww3c7>

**Covid-19 Staff Testing**

Last week, staff members in school now have the opportunity to participate in twice-weekly testing for Coronavirus. These tests are conducted in their homes using a 'lateral flow device'. This is part of the Government's efforts to reduce transmission of Coronavirus, most notably because up to 1 in 3 people are carrying and transmitting the virus without showing any symptoms. By testing themselves regularly, they will be helping to stop the virus spreading. Whilst this is excellent news for the safety and wellbeing of our community, I must acknowledge the increased possibility of class bubbles closing as a result of any positive test results.

In such circumstance, you will receive a letter via email informing you of the bubble closure. Any member of staff who tests positive with a 'lateral flow device' will be required to then undertake a lab-processed test for confirmation. As such, bubble closures will be initially temporary, subject to later confirmation. I would imagine that this testing will continue in a circumstance whereby all children are permitted to return to school so it is important all parents are aware of this new initiative. My thanks to the staff team for their willingness to engage with this effort.

### Half-Term

The Department for Education has confirmed that schools will close to all children as usual over February half-term (*week beginning 15th February*). For our Free School Meals families, schools do not need to provide lunch parcels/vouchers during the February half-term; however vouchers will be provided by the Local Authority.

### Parents Evening

We usually have our second parents evening event before the February half term; as a school team we have decided to postpone this event to later in the year. This will allow a more informed discussion about your child's progress once they have been back at school. In the meantime, if you would like a discussion about your child, please email your class teacher and they will welcome a virtual meeting.

### Children's Wellbeing - Mental Health Week



We are very aware that remote learning has a risk of leading to significantly increased screen-time and increased sedentary behaviours which could negatively impact on the wellbeing of children, parents and staff members alike. At Houghton Conquest, we are always committed first and foremost to the well-being of our children, staff and families. We know that happy and healthy teachers and parents can support children far better.

As such, we were delighted to enjoy together a well-being assembly that was led by Mrs Sebborn, followed by a story that was carefully chosen to discuss wellbeing topics, to coincide with children's mental health week. We hope this brought some enjoyment to your children's minds and offered your child ways to develop themselves in ways beyond those which our remote learning currently offers.

It is always important to celebrate our children's success in every way as we truly know that our children are amazing. Have a go at reading and finishing these sentences below with your child to boost their self-esteem. I would love to share some of your children's answers on our school website, so feel free to send me them via [head@hcschool.org.uk](mailto:head@hcschool.org.uk).

### I am amazing because ...

1. I am a good friend because ...
2. I am proud of myself when...
3. I am really good at ...
4. I have worked hard to improve...
5. My special talent is...
6. I am thoughtful because ...
7. I am unique because ...
8. I am a good family member because ...



You have my continued thanks, support and admiration for your efforts at this time. We are here if you need our support.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Miss J Heaslip  
Headteacher