



LANCHESTER E.P. (Cont.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Friday 5th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you all managed to have some time away from work and make the most of the amazing weather with your children over the half term holiday. I think we have been so fortunate to have so much sunshine during the last couple of months. I just hope we haven't had our summer already!

Home-Schooling

Life seems to be really tough at the moment for so many of you. I know some are returning to work which will no doubt bring about anxiety. Others may well be worried about your jobs and the economy whilst many parents will still be struggling with working from home and trying to home-school. These are certainly very tough and uncertain times for us all – for a variety of different reasons.

I am sure your children are also finding things even tougher as time passes. If anyone had told me that schools would be closed for the majority of pupils for over 2 months, I would never have believed them – it really is totally unbelievable that we are all in this position. However, please just continue to reassure your children that we are missing them, we are still here for them and we do think about them all daily.

Please also try to remain as calm as possible over home-schooling. As I have said many times before – it is very hard, can be disillusioning and can cause tension in your relationships with your children. After all, you are their parents, not their teachers. You know your child better than anyone. If they are becoming stressed or anxious, my advice has always been and always will be to just put the work on hold - academic ability is really just one part of being a child and of being a successful person. We need to continue to develop the whole child, their range of talents and interests and I will continue to recommend you use this time (which you will never get back again) to do things with your child that you 'always meant to do but never quite got round to'!

Gradual Wider Re-Opening of Schools

Obviously we are very busy preparing the school for the gradual re-opening. It is quite a challenge just to keep on top of the ever-changing guidance that is being published! I just want to reassure you all that when we do open, we will have prepared everything to the very best of our ability to ensure that your children and all members of the school community are kept as safe as possible.

The decision to send your child back to school at this time is extremely emotive and one that is currently being played out in both the press and on social media. I just want to reiterate that we respect the decision that each and every one of you has made – whatever that is – and I am sure I speak for whole school community when I say this. Everyone has an opinion on whether children should or should not return to school just yet. However, there are a huge number of factors that parents are making the decisions they are and we all need to respect those decisions. Support and empathy of each other is more important than ever during this difficult time and I know our school community will continue to be as brilliant as it always has been!

Nursery, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 parents and children may feel that they have been forgotten – you most certainly have not! Please rest assured that even though we are preparing for the wider re-opening of our school, we will still continue to work with you all as much as ever. Even though the teachers will all be in school, there will be time during the day for them to interact on the class discussion pages and to keep in touch with you all. I would love to think that we will see you all at some point this half term – but obviously we have to follow the guidance and direction from the government and the local authority.

Zoom Calls

It has been wonderful to actually 'see' some of the children again with our Zoom calls this week. We had a lovely time with our Year 5 classes yesterday and plan to continue to do this with other year groups next week. We hope to meet with Year 6 again, Year 2, 3 & 4 next week. Parents – watch out for an email which will give you details of times and how to join the meeting!

Year 6

Year 6 parents have had emails about the leavers' hoodies – we hope to get these ordered as soon as possible so the children can enjoy wearing them! Also, we do have plans to give them as good a send off as possible. We are hoping to hold our leavers' service via zoom, the leavers' assembly might be able to be held outside with just the children present socially distanced from each other (we would aim to record it so that parents can see it too) and we aim to have a party day at some point – even if it might have to be on Tuesday 1st September...

Obviously, it is challenging to plan very far ahead as we just cannot predict future guidelines. However, we want you all to know that we have not forgotten them and will organise what we can when we can!

Learning By Questions

We have trialled an additional session of this at 11am on a Wednesday morning but this has not been as popular with our children. Therefore from next week, we will continue to have 3 sessions a week but at 9.30 am every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning. We hope this means that your days are slightly more structured and start off well with an interactive lesson.

Belongings of Nursery Children

We need to clear the Nursery area to enable us to safely welcome back our Reception children. However, there are still a lot of belongings of children left in the Nursery and a few of you have asked about when you will be able to come and collect them all. Next week, we will put all coats, wellies, bags etc out in the Nursery yard and ask parents to come at set times to collect them. Please note – everyone must go to the Nursery door, ring the bell and a member of staff will meet you at a safe, social distance and then let you into the Nursery yard. Please note, we can only allow one adult onto the school grounds and in the Nursery yard due to health and safety reasons. Thank you.

In order to do this safely, please follow the instructions below:

Robins	Monday	Surnames:	A-M 10 am–12am	N – Z in the afternoon 1pm-3pm
Elephants	Tuesday	Surnames:	A-M 10 am–12am	N – Z in the afternoon 1pm-3pm
Hedgehogs	Wednesday	Surnames:	A-M 10 am–12am	N – Z in the afternoon 1pm-3pm
Goldfish	Thursday	Surnames:	A-M 10 am–12am	N – Z in the afternoon 1pm-3pm
Starfish	Friday	Surnames:	A-M 10 am–12am	N – Z in the afternoon 1pm-3pm

Residentials

I am sure you will all have realised that there is no possibility of residentials taking place for the remainder of this academic year. We had so many booked and I realise it is desperately disappointing for our children.

The visits to Birdswald and Seahouses visits have been cancelled so refunds will be on their way for Year 3 & 4 parents.

The ski trip is sorted too – parents can either have a credit note for next year or a refund which will be issued on 1st August. I will be emailing parents soon to ask them what they would like to do. I am just currently confirming the dates for next year and will then write out to all Year 4, 5 & 6 parents to see if anyone else would like to book for next year.

PGL Residential

I am not sure whether any of you have seen the publicity this company is currently receiving but it is not positive. I am afraid we are struggling to get any sense out of the company at all at the moment. We have been trying to resolve this situation for quite some time and have sent numerous emails as they are not answering their phones. Just this week, I have sent an email making my frustration and anger quite clear to them about the way they are treating their customers.

I have taken thousands of children to their centres spanning over my whole 30 year teaching career and the one time we need some support from them, they appear to be letting us down quite spectacularly. I have made it quite clear that if they are not fair to us, then they will lose our custom. You would have thought that they, like other companies, would simply let us defer the booking – this way – nobody loses out (apart from the Year 6 children again who won't be able to go next year). Unbelievably, they have said this is not possible.

I will continue to fight this as much as I can. I am sure many of you have had holidays postponed or cancelled and no doubt you will have had mixed responses from the companies you booked with. However, the responsibility of fairness for over 70 families is something which we will not give up on. Please do not worry – I am sure we will get there – but it just may take a little time. I will have to ask for your patience on this one while we try to resolve the matter.

Reception New Starters

We are so looking forward to welcoming our new starters into Reception in September – it is just a shame they will not get the same transition as previous years. However, we will do what we can to make sure all new starters feel confident and happy prior to them starting with this in the new academic year.

We will email all the paperwork to you at the start of next week – if this can be returned by Monday 15th June, it would be very helpful and then we can sort out a date for a virtual transition evening!

Organisation for 15th June for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6

We are now in a position to share some of the organisation for the above year groups' return to school. Separate emails will be sent out to let you know which bubble your child is in. The staff have considered the groupings of these all very carefully taking into account friendship groups and staffing. More information will be shared next week about how to enter and leave the school grounds and buildings, including our new behaviour policy and safety measures.

However, we realise that you need to know the timings of the staggered starts and finishing times:

Reception Bubble A	Mr Osmond and Mrs Evans	8.45am Start	2.45pm Finish
Reception Bubble B	Miss Butler, Miss Watchman & Miss Brierley	9.00am Start	3.00pm Finish
Reception Bubble C	Mr McLoughlin, Mrs Riddell & Mrs Moran	9.15am Start	3.15pm Finish
Reception Bubble D	Mrs Grieve and Mrs O'Halloran	9.30am Start	3.30pm Finish
Year 1 Bubble A	Mrs Sant and Mrs Race	8.45am Start	2.45pm Finish
Year 1 Bubble B	Mrs Startup and Miss Honan	9.00am Start	3.00pm Finish
Year 1 Bubble C	Mrs Burke and Mrs S Davis	9.15am Start	3.15pm Finish
Year 1 Bubble D	Miss Martin and Mrs McGilvray	9.30am Start	3.30pm Finish
Year 6 Bubble A	Mr Taylor and Mrs Boyd	8.45am Start	3.00pm Finish
Year 6 Bubble B	Mrs Tate, Mr Knighton and Mrs Tatham	9.00am Start	3.15pm Finish

The school will close at 12.30pm every Friday.

There will be four entrances used for the four Reception Bubbles – the two Reception doors and two Nursery doors. The Year 1 children will use the entrance through the Infant Car Park (the 'old' main entrance that was used when the building work was taking place).

The Year 6 children will use the field gate entrance – the one we used when the building work was taking place.

Key worker and vulnerable children will use the hall door as their entrance as their base will be changed to the two current Year 5 classes.

Lunchtime will be shorter as games and activities will have to be restricted on the yard and field. Lunches will all be eaten in the classrooms and school meals (packed lunches) will be provided for those requesting it. Please inform the school office if you require a school meal – school.office@lanchesterep.net It is hoped that we will progress to providing hot meals but we need to take one step at a time.

Unfortunately, there will be no access to the school building for parents – this forms part of our risk assessment.

There will be more information shared by the middle of next week once it has all been finalised over the weekend. I am sure the children will thoroughly enjoy being back – we will make sure they do!

If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.

With warmest wishes to you and your families,

Jane Davis

Mrs Jane Davis

