

Whitehill Junior School

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Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to the start of the summer term at Whitehill. I must admit it feels quite strange writing that opening sentence, however I think it is important to maintain some element of normality during these unprecedented times.

Information contained within this letter:

- The Easter Holiday and staying in touch
- Work for the coming weeks
- My expectations

School has remained open over the Easter break for key worker pupils and I am grateful to all staff who have been working in school and at home. The last four weeks were very much an opportunity to find our feet and ensure we are supporting pupils, families and staff. We are glad that we have been able to stay in touch with so many of you, whether it's through your engagement with one or more of the digital platforms sharing your experiences or speaking over the phone. We have really enjoyed seeing the various iterations of banana bread as well as the other creative life skills pupils have been learning. Please remember, that if you wish to contact us, you can use the consult@whitehill.herts.sch.uk and I will alert your child's teacher.

For as long as the school remains closed, teachers will provide work to consolidate pupils' learning. We would like to reassure you all that we do not expect parents and carers to take on the role of a teacher. There are so many reasons why this is just not possible. We understand that there are different challenges and circumstances in every family. There is never going to be a perfect solution that will meet everyone's needs: we will do our utmost to make it work for you. We recognise that you might wish to make adaptations to the work provided, including extending or reducing it. Already we have received feedback from families in relation to the volume of work as well as the pitch. It is hard to get it right: there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Where possible we are trying to accommodate and support individuals and please do get in touch if you're struggling.

The teachers will set an expectation that some of the work completed from now on will need to be submitted via the respective digital classrooms by given dates. Feedback will be given by teachers to this work but again, this will be in a variety of forms and may not necessarily be individual. This is mainly suggested as a way to motivate pupils and support you when trying to persuade your child to engage. We think that if pupils are working hard but this is never seen by a teacher they might, over time, lose interest. Also, some parents have said that they would find it helpful to use submission to the teacher as a way to encourage their child to complete a task. Please allow me to stress: this is



intended to be a support. **We are absolutely not suggesting that there will be any sanction or consequence to work that is not submitted** (although it is your choice, as a parent, whether you wish to share that with your child!).

These lessons will be shared via Google Classroom where the teachers will set out their expectations. They may include a pre-recorded video presentation, or audio description but they will not, for obvious logistical reasons include a live lesson.

The lessons and work in English and maths are likely to involve consolidation of key skills already covered, an opportunity to practise what has previously been taught in school. There may be some new content in topic-based lessons where pupils are asked to find something out or research a concept and then present it in a variety of ways. You may have seen a fantastic example of some artwork from Harriet (Year 6) which we shared on twitter on Friday.

In reality, I believe three English and three maths activities a week is appropriate and manageable by the majority. In addition, there may be a science-themed activity and / or topic-based task.

I will continue to add links onto the '[Home Learning](#)' page of our website which could provide additional information and resources should you want more inspiration for your children.

Can I please reiterate that we are not asking you to home-school your children. Home schooling involves visits to museums, art galleries, opens spaces, social face-to-face interactions and so much else that lockdown makes impossible. Now is certainly not the time to worry about your child's academic progress. Rest assured that we will take care of that when school is reopened. Please do what you can; please engage in as much of the work offered by teachers as possible; please do not worry and most importantly, please keep sharing your photos of banana bread!

Finally, many of you will have seen reports in the press that ministers are considering opening schools in three weeks, although the Secretary of State for Education in yesterday's briefing refuted this claim. I can confirm that nothing has come into schools preparing us for this and the union's advice is clear in stating that schools should only consider opening when it is safe enough to do so.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions. In order to ensure I don't miss your correspondence, please use the temporary email address consult@whitehill.herts.sch.uk.

Best wishes,



Steve Mills
Headteacher

