

Oaklands Junior School

Headteacher - Mrs H West

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your families are all keeping well. Next week will be our half term holiday, so school will be closed. I hope you all enjoy a well-earned break from home-learning to recharge your batteries for the final half term and fingers crossed that the weather will be good for us all too.

All of our families have been absolutely wonderful in all that has been achieved to date in home learning and we are very proud of you. It has been lovely to see all the creativity around VE day and the Book of Hopes, which we plan to publish on our return to school as a record of this time. Thank you for all your support and please remember that keeping safe and healthy whilst being mindful of your family's wellbeing must always be your top priority not only in this week of Mental Health Awareness but always.

We have been very pleased to begin the Microsoft Teams video call meetings over the last few weeks with each class, which has been a welcome addition to our communication and interaction between the children and their class team - not only via the video but also before and afterwards in the communications that can be made in Teams which continues to be well received. Staff have been very pleased with these sessions and are keen to continue this on a regular basis. We have not yet managed to reach out to all our year groups, as this has taken some time to set up with everything else that has been happening in school and home learning. Year 3, we have not forgotten you, and you will most certainly be our top priority when we return after half term.

Proposed School Re-opening – 1st June

With all our extensive training and experience of safeguarding, risk assessments and emergency planning, this lockdown has been something, the like of which, has never been experienced in our lives before! However, the common thread for us all is that children are, and always will be, at the heart of everything we do and we will always prioritise health, safety and wellbeing.

Please forgive me for this later than expected letter. There have been many unanswered questions that still remain from the government, which I know the unions are still following up, as they discuss whether this is the right time to re-open schools and whether we can ensure safety for all. In my role as Headteacher, my main concern at this time is not education, but to ensure the safety of our children and staff first. This can be a very anxious time for parents as it is for members of my staff who are in school on rotas, returning home to their families but in all of this, I have been very proud of this school and my staff in how we always stay positive and look for ways that we can make things work. Regular hand-washing throughout the day, cleaning of equipment used and socially distancing as much as we are physically able to do, all helps. We are well used to assessing all the risks in all that we do daily with children and ensuring that we are giving children the best possible experiences of learning, whilst putting measures in place to minimise any risks.

We are very much looking forward to the return of our Y6s on 1st June, and we have been working hard to ensure that we have everything in place to be ready to safely open, with lots of extra safety measures incorporated. We will only open on that date if it is safe to do so and the government do not change or delay this date.

Our plan will involve children being taught in separate smaller groups (at a maximum of 15 per classroom) on a staged return of days in school, rather than back full-time. We are restricted in how we can manage this, due to social distancing and not allowing groups to mix. A separate letter is being sent to our Y6 families to give them further details of what to expect and the days/group that their children will be in, including who will be teaching their group. May I thank all our Y6 families for your responses to our survey, which enabled us to plan for numbers, friendship groups and to ensure adequate staffing. A similar survey will be sent out when our next year group is announced for returning to school. A useful 'Frequently Asked Questions and Answers' is attached to this letter, so that you can all hopefully have an idea of what to expect, regarding re-opening. Our key worker/vulnerable group will also continue as normal in a separate group throughout the week, as is the case now. In addition, we will still be running our home learning on OWL for all the children who will still be working from home.

Although the government's ultimate aim is for everyone to be back in school full-time for a month before we break for the summer holidays, it is difficult to know at this stage how this can work. **There is absolutely nothing we would like more than to have ALL our children back in school** - school is not the same without you; however, we have to be sure that it is safe to open. It is therefore unreasonable for any schools to be expected to have all the children back in school for a full month before we break for the summer holidays, that is if we are still expected to be adhering to social distancing!

Please remember that the government are giving you the opportunity to decide if your child(ren) will return or not. No penalty notices will be issued and there will be no fines for non-attendance, so it really is absolutely your choice to do what you think is right for you and your child(ren) at this time.

Best wishes to you all for a lovely half term.

Please keep healthy and stay safe.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. H. West
Headteacher