



**NORTON SUB HAMDON and WEST CHINNOCK
C of E VC PRIMARY SCHOOL FEDERATION**



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Dear Parents and Carers,

It's more of a newsletter than a letter this week! In a break from tradition, we will also be providing information over the half-term so that we do everything to communicate to you, involve and prepare you for the phased reopening of schools.

Poetry competition

We are delighted to announce the **Norton and West Chinnock Poetry Prize 2020!** Entrants are asked to write an ekphrastic poem, i.e. a poem inspired by a painting or drawing. Some suggestions and pictures to support you can be found on the Somerset Literacy Network website and we will upload these into the Google Classrooms too.

What's more, when children have written their poem, it can be entered into two competitions! Firstly, the Somerset Literacy Network Competition (details attached). Secondly, and most prestigiously, we are running our own Norton and West Chinnock Poetry Prize 2020! For our schools' competition, the winning poems will be published in the Parish Magazine and there will be prizes for the different categories sponsored by our Governing Board.

Some of the children have already started this in their English lessons online so have had a slight head start! If you haven't, don't worry there is still plenty of time. **The deadline for entries (which you can send in via e-mail, on Google Classroom, post or drop off) is midday on Monday 15th June 2020.** We are looking forward to reading them and plans are in place for a local author to be involved in judging. Good luck everyone!

Art project

We are working with Serena de la Hey, Teaching Assistant and local willow sculptor, on an art project connected to the lockdown period we have experienced. The idea is to create a collaborative piece for each school which would become an enduring record of the time in lockdown. Our hope is that this would not only create a new contemporary artwork for each school but also contribute towards helping the children reconcile their experiences during lockdown. More details of how you can all get involved to follow in the next half term. Thank you to Serena for this opportunity.

Residential trips

Sadly, we can now confirm that both residential trips are cancelled this year. If we have not done so already, we will be issuing a full refund. We are already thinking about arrangements for next year. Going forward, there will be changes made to the way residential trips are run and the plan is for children from our schools to go on residential trips together which will give them the opportunity to meet and work with friends across our schools. It will also continue the positive relationships and collaboration our staff have built over the year. This would be for next Year's 5 & 6 in the summer term 2021. We will be looking at options for a joint Year 3 & 4 experience locally too.

The Whole School

With all the planning that is in place and preparations going on for the return of pupils in Year R, 1 and 6, we wanted to reassure parents of children in Years 2,3,4 and 5 that we haven't forgotten about you! We are putting arrangements in place, as part of our plan for reopening, which enable staff to have times set and respond to work online. If the opening does go ahead, we are dedicating our Fridays to this. This will mean that you will not have as much interaction available to you through the week but we are able to keep in touch. We are exploring other ways that we can communicate with you and incorporate you more into the life of our schools.

For Class 3 at Norton (Years 3 & 4), Mrs Parkinson and Mrs Fox are running the key worker provision so won't be available to comment on Google Classrooms on a Friday. For this class, Mrs Merrett will do more responding and Mrs P & Mrs Fox will continue to look & comment when they can.

There is much talk in the press about the government's 'ambition' for all pupils to return for a month before the summer holiday. If the current health and safety guidance remains in place, we would simply not be able to accommodate everyone in the schools at the same time. Therefore, if we are required to have more pupils back before the summer break, we would have to use a rota system so that not all children are in at once.

We are working on our plans for the welcoming of new pupils to our schools in September as well as working and speaking with our Secondary School partners on the transition arrangements of Year 6.

We thank you all - parents and carers for your patience at this time and we will communicate our plans to you at every step as soon as information comes in.

Building works and developments to the school sites

At Norton, work is underway to transform the central area of the school. The computer suite has been removed and the library refashioned which has created a lovely open space at the heart of the school. We are working with suppliers to make this a useable space as soon as possible. Thank you to the FONS for all your work in funding this project.

At West Chinnock, we are delighted to announce that the building work, that we have been waiting so long for, is due to start on June 1st. Steel supports are being put in to strengthen the old school floor upstairs. The work will make usable again a staff room, office, Heads' office upstairs as well as creating space for a kitchen (with a serving hatch) and dining area. It will take some time to complete and we are hopeful that, by September, this will all be up and running.

Update from Governor Simon Roughton is that we are getting closer to the library construction starting and once started, it should not take long to complete. From the start we have been working hard to secure quotes, obtain approvals and move forward, but have also been as frustrated by pace of progress. It is important to be clear that this is not down to a lack of trying and energy; more the planning and approval processes involved in a school building project.

However, the good news is that we have the approvals in place and we are approaching the point where we should be able to start in the near future. Thank you for all your patience - we are getting there!

Governor meeting

Yesterday evening, we held our first ever full governing meeting on zoom.

Topics discussed included the high take up and engagement with online learning and everything that you as parents are doing to work with the school on this. It is likely that as normality returns, we will continue using Google Classrooms for example with homework.

As you would expect, the large proportion of the meeting was spent going through the Health and Safety/Risk Assessments involved in the imminent reopening of our schools.

Information so far on our plans to reopen

The guidance we are following requires us to use a range of approaches and actions to prevent transmission. The measures can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, create an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. Below we outline the ways that we will do this and what it will look like in our schools.

Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms

To keep staff, children, parents and the wider community safe it is essential that if any individual is unwell with coronavirus symptoms, or have someone in their household who is, that they do not attend school. This is everyone's responsibility.

Frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices

We are putting in place systems so children and staff clean hands regularly. We are working with suppliers to source products which are kinder to young hands such as soaps without dyes or perfumes, alcohol gel, non-alcohol disinfectant foam and soft disposable paper towels. As an additional protective measure, children in Year 6 may bring in their own bottle of hand sanitiser to go in their individual tray. We will provide a non-alcohol disinfectant foam for children in year's R and 1.

We are promoting good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach for everyone at school and have ordered more bins for safe disposal of tissues.

We encourage all parents to refresh your children's understanding of good hand and respiratory hygiene. The message is still to wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered. Hands may become drier and using a good moisturiser is also an important part of maintaining good hand hygiene, so we recommend children moisturise their hands after washing them when they are at home.

You may also check out the e bug resource to engage children in a fun way about this topic <https://e-bug.eu/>

We are in touch with the school nursing team, to provide further learning on this once children return. By involving, explaining and engaging children in these processes, they are more likely to understand, carry them out and become an embedded part of their routine.

Regular cleaning of settings

We are working with our cleaning and site team to ensure that frequently touched surfaces are cleaned often using the correct products. We have built in extra cleaning time and will ensure that different cleaning kits are used for each protective bubble group.

We are in the process of removing and storing unnecessary items from classrooms and soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts).

We are taking steps to ensure that rooms are well ventilated and making best use of our outside space.

Minimising contact and mixing

Within this measure, there are several things that we are doing to minimise contact and mixing. The main consideration here is to ensure that children and young people are in the same small bubble groups at all times each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days. We are ensuring that the same teacher or teaching assistants are assigned to each group. See the attachment which shows our bubble groups.

We are ensuring that these bubble groups use the same allocated classroom area and that when pupils are seated, this is at the same desk space throughout the week.

These groups will operate independently of each other and have allocated toilet facilities, staggered break and lunchtimes. We have worked carefully on 'flows' around the school site, ensuring fire safety arrangements, to further minimise mixing of different groups.

Each bubble will have a mobile phone number which we will share with you for contact (the offices will not be in operation). We may need to shut down individual bubbles in certain circumstances and we are putting in place a cascade system to notify you about this.

Drop off and pick up arrangements

If your child needs to be accompanied to school, only one parent should attend. We will communicate with you your allocated drop off and collection time. We will let you know where you should drop off and collect. We envisage that a staggered drop off will take place between 9am-10am and pick up between 2pm-3pm. There will be signage to help everyone socially distance at the entrance.

Parents must not gather at the entrance or enter the site. During this period there will be no visitors, parents or volunteers on site.

The school week

So that we minimise the number of staff per bubble group, we will only be operating a Monday – Thursday week for pupils in Year R, 1 and 6, allowing teachers the time on a Friday to plan and prepare work not only for the children at school but also those at home. The provision for the children of key workers will continue to operate Monday – Friday 8.30am-4pm.

We are hoping to explain and show what the classrooms will look like and the protective measures we are putting in place. We hope that this will remove some of the uncertainty and apprehension around these new measures. Some of this communication may not come out until the **INSET day on 1st June** as we will be finalizing and double checking arrangements including putting up signage.

We will be sending out updated information on sunscreen application, non-school uniform. **Important information to note is that children will only need their drinks bottle, hand sanitiser (optional extra for year 6) and their packed lunch. They will not need their pencil cases, book bags or school bags.**

If your child is entitled to a free school meal (or universal free school meal for Year R and 1), we are able to provide this. If your child will be coming in and requires a lunch, please e-mail NortonSH@educ.somerset.gov.uk by 3pm on Wednesday 27th May.

We are following the government guidelines and where possible we will provide additional protective measures, for example with greater spacing between desks, using the village hall at Norton as additional capacity, sourcing additional equipment for hand hygiene and an INSET day dedicated to the processes involved in school reopening.

Attendance

The guidance states that eligible children – including priority groups – are strongly encouraged to attend their education setting, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable.

Families should notify their nursery, school or college as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

Teaching and learning

The teaching team are meeting regularly, often on zoom to discuss what and how to teach. We have discussed how we support pupil wellbeing, how to maximise the outdoors, creative art and play ideas and how, especially for our Year 6s how we can use technology to upload work to the class board. Our philosophy is to look for positive and new ways to learn together and make this a positive experience for our pupils and staff alike.

Key worker provision (village hall in Norton)

We will be moving our key worker bubble to the village hall at Norton. This is for the children of key workers in Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 from our schools. Our concern is that demand is growing and we have to cap daily numbers to 15 pupils. We ask that parents give us a month's worth of requests for this service to help with our planning, preparation and protecting our provision. **Please email this to the school by Wednesday 27th May.**

We are very grateful to the village and the village hall committee for use of the hall. We hope that it will go down as an important time in village history.

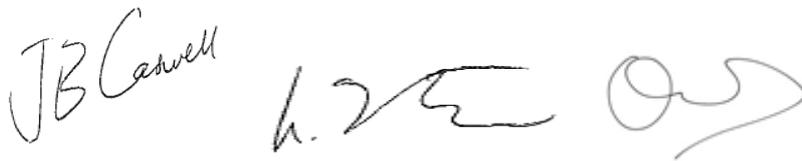
There is no denying about how much there is to achieve including moving of furniture and equipment, creating bespoke signage and giving staff confidence in new ways of working. We also have staff continuing to provide provision for children of key workers for two days over the half-term. It is certainly apt that this week saw 'thank a teacher day' and we cannot thank all our staff enough for their dedication at this time. <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher-day/>

And whilst we are doing everything to open for the start of June, we are prepared that the government may change the date to later in June or beyond at any given point if the conditions have not been met. In addition, if we feel that our own preparations for the reopening to Year R, 1 and 6 will require longer for us to implement in our schools, we will inform you at the earliest opportunity.

We have spoken to almost all parents in Years R, 1 and 6 (we have left messages on your phone and will email those of you who we have been unable to contact). Discussing your concerns and answering your questions has really helped us with our planning and preparation. Our aim is to work with you and be open and transparent about the plans and new procedures.

Thank you for taking the time to read the letter. We hope you have a restful bank holiday and half-term.

Yours sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'JB Caswell'. The middle signature is 'L. Stiddard' and the signature on the right is 'O. Donaldson'.

Mr J Caswell & Ms L Stiddard
Co-Headteachers

Mr O Donaldson
Chair of Governors