

EXWICK HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Autumn Term – September 10th 2020

Website: www.exwickheights.devon.sch.uk

Dear Parents & Carers,

It has been so fantastic to welcome your children to our school this week. They have brightened everyday with their giggles and I have been so impressed by the way that they have settled in. After such a long and disrupted period, they have adjusted incredibly well.

I would also like to thank our community for the support we have received. As I wrote earlier this week, I was concerned on the first day by the number of people gathered at the school gates but your response was fantastic and it has improved significantly. It is so important, during the pandemic that we all ensure that we take steps to protect both our families and the community. Thank you!

Our Reception children begin their first full week of school next week after attending for three induction days and as a whole class for the first time today. They, again, have settled incredibly quickly.

Once our Reception children have completed their first full week (next Friday, the 18th of September), we hope to be able to enable our KS2 pupils who live closest to the Peterborough Road entrance to access and leave our school via our Early Years building, easing some of the 'traffic' along Exwick Lane. However, we need to wait until our youngest children are settled to be certain that this is safe to do. I will hopefully be able to confirm this in my next letter.

Government Guidance – Social Distancing

As was announced on Wednesday, the Government have introduced new rules to help to prevent the spread of Covid 19. Alongside social distancing, we would like to encourage adults attending the area around the school to wear a face covering if possible, to help to make our children's journey to and from school even safer. We recognise that some individuals are unable to wear a face covering and we are also very mindful that we have no right to ask this. However, if more of us wear a face covering, we greatly reduce the risk if a footpath or road is busy with other pedestrians.

As staff, we have been taking masks out on duty before and after school to ensure that we wear it if we need to engage in conversation but we also recognise that for our children, being able to see a smile is really important as they arrive and so we will only put our masks on when in close proximity. Please be reassured that we are not being rude when we do this.

Messages for School

Thank you all so much for emailing and calling your messages into school rather than speaking to staff on duty. We really have appreciated your support with this, to help protect both you and staff from risk.

Booking Lunches – School Gateway

Just a quick reminder that all school dinners need to be ordered and paid for prior to the start of the school day for which it is ordered. School Gateway is a simple app, which can be downloaded. Please contact the school office if you would like any support in using it.

Exwick Lane

I have noticed that this lane is looking rather overgrown at the moment and have again reported this to the council, requesting that the vegetation is cut back. If you would also like to report any highway problems that you notice around our school, then the following website allows you to do so quickly: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>
Problems cover everything from potholes to parking issues!

Flu Vaccinations

We have been informed that our school has been given December as the month for our children to be given flu vaccinations here at school. We have requested that this date is brought forward but understand that the immunisation team from Virgin Care are unable to do this. I wanted to make families aware as early as possible in case you wish to arrange an earlier vaccination yourself. Closer to December, Virgin Care will contact families with further information and to request permission for the vaccination, if appropriate.

Extra Curricular Activities – Clubs and Peripatetic Teachers

We have had a small number of enquiries regarding extra-curricular clubs and peripatetic music lessons. I'm afraid that we have delayed beginning these by a few weeks this year to ensure that everything here is as safe as possible. We currently have dedicated rooms and playgrounds for each year group and this would need to be continued into our arrangements for clubs and music lessons. We have decided to first prioritise settling children into the usual school routine before considering extending the school day further. As such, we have taken the decision to wait until October before beginning any extra-curricular provision, which will also be run in 'year group bubbles.' This will limit the number of clubs available.

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Belongings

As stated in my last newsletter, where possible, we ask that children only bring their plastic water bottle (only containing water. Fizzy drinks, flavoured water and squash are not permitted), their book bag and, if appropriate, packed lunches to school. PE kit - and if desired, pencil cases - should come into school on the first day of term and then remain in school (pupils in our Reception Year will not need a PE kit initially). However, we understand that occasionally, a child may need to bring in other items for after school. If this is unavoidable, bags for this purpose will be stored externally and will not be permitted in the classroom. We understand that children like to have a 'school bag', but this is not part of our school uniform and we strongly encourage parents and carers not to send a school bag into school during the pandemic, if at all possible. Thank you for your support with this.

Reading Books and Homelearning

We are quarantining items that are being sent home from school for three days prior to sending them home to better protect you from risk. We will also leave items that come in (such as reading books or Homelearning that cannot be sent electronically) for three days. Unfortunately, at the current time, we are unable to open our school library for the foreseeable future as this would involve bubbles crossing.

Instead, we will use our fantastic library books to swell children's home reading book resources, to make sure that the three days quarantine does not prevent children from having a reading book. We have delayed sending our reading books out slightly this year, to enable us to fully assess the children after the long period of absence for the majority, without putting them on the spot! Reading books will begin to be sent home at the end of next week.

Tiredness

Finally, please be reassured that it is very understandable that your child or children will be extremely tired this weekend! Our classrooms are busy places and that, along with the many changes that have had to be introduced, will mean that everyone will be needing to relax.

Please remember to contact us at any time if you have any questions or concerns via the usual school email address or telephone number.

Wishing you all a fantastic weekend!

Best wishes,



Mrs C. Neal
Headteacher

Term Dates Academic Year 2020/21

Friday 4th Sept 2020	Non pupil day/teaching and admin staff only
Monday 7 th Sept 2020	Non pupil day/teaching and admin staff only
Tues 8 th Sept 2020	Children return to school
Mon 26 th - Fri 30 th Oct inclusive	Half Term
Mon 2 nd Nov 2020	Staff and children return
Thurs 17 th Dec	Last day of term
Fri 18 th Dec 2020 - Fri 31 st Dec 2020	Christmas holiday
Mon 4 th Jan 2021	Non pupil day
Tues 5 th Jan 2021	Children return to school
Monday 15 th - Friday 19 th Feb 2021	Half term
Monday 22nd Feb 2021	Staff and children return to school
Thursday 1st Apr 2021	Last day of term
Friday 2 nd - Friday 16 th Apr 2021	Easter holiday
Mon 19 th Apr 2021	Non pupil day
Tuesday 20th Apr 2021	Children return to school
Mon 3 rd May 2021	Bank holiday
Tues 4 th May 2021	Return to school after bank holiday weekend
Mon 31 st May - Fri 4 th June 2021	Half term
Mon 7 th June 2021	Non pupil day
Tues 8 th June 2021	Children return to school
Thurs 22 nd July	Last day of term for children and staff
Fri 23 rd July 2021	Occasional day
Mon 26 th July 2021	Summer holiday begins