



6th July 2020

Dear parents/carers,

As you may know, the government guidance on full opening of schools in September was published last Thursday (2nd July). This means we can start firming up our plans for the autumn term. Risk assessments, policies and other legal and practical activities need to be carried out, and this proving – once again – to be quite time-consuming. As soon as we have a definitive plan, we will send the information out to you. Please bear with us. More of a concern to us at the moment is how we address the issue of missed learning time and plan for catching up. Class teachers have been looking at the main gaps (essential learning that has not been covered) and senior staff and subject leaders are drawing this information together to put a cohesive “recovery curriculum” in place in readiness for whole-school return.

You need to be aware that whatever the details of our plans, there will have to be some changes in school, both in terms of the environment and the way we do things. For example, as we have a lot of curriculum content to try and catch up, we have decided that even if larger public gatherings are allowed again, for the next school year we will be reducing our school events, both in number and scale. We will still celebrate Christmas, for example, but are probably going to have a carol concert and ‘tableau’ rather than a full nativity with new songs and scripts; we may not have a Mother’s Day Assembly next year, etc. The reason for this, and I hope you understand, is that these types of productions and performances take many hours to prepare and rehearse – hours that we feel would be better spent on catching up lost learning. I met (virtually) with governors last week and talked this through with them and they agreed. My School Development Plan for 2020-2021 has COVID-19 Recovery as its first priority, and it is pivotal in ensuring our school improvement process does not lose momentum. It may also mean that ‘home learning’ doesn’t end completely and there will still be a requirement for children to complete additional activities at home to help them catch up. We hope we can rely on your support with this.

Home learning will change after this week. If children were in school, they would be being assessed to help us identify where they are in terms of age-related expectations and provide us with valuable information for the following school year. Next week (w.c. 13th July) will be Assessment Week – an opportunity for you, and us, to see how much learning has been retained during the time children have not attended school. Class teachers will put a series of assessment activities on their class page in place of home learning. Whilst these will be, in essence, ‘tests’, we are not expecting children to complete these activities in test conditions (i.e. alone, in silence and for a set amount of time). There will be a series of worksheet-based activities to complete based on: number and calculations; mental maths; times tables; phonics (if applicable); grammar and punctuation; reading comprehension, and a piece of writing. Full details and instructions will be provided by class teachers. The activities will be based on age-related expectation for their current year group and therefore some children may find them difficult, but it is important that both parents and teachers are aware of children’s level of competence within their year group’s expectations in order that School can plan the next steps in their learning. You may want to ‘assess’ your child yourself, identifying things they find tricky and continuing to work on these areas throughout the summer holidays (it will be beneficial to your child if you do).

We would like all of the assessment work to be returned to school when the children come back on Wednesday 3rd September. If any of you will require printed copies of any of the activities, blank paper or stationery in order that your child can complete the work, then please let us know and we will arrange a time for you to collect.

Remember, we will finish early on Friday 17th July (Reception 12.30pm; Year 1 .00pm; Year 6 and Key Workers 1.30pm). We have had to stagger the times to allow for safe, socially distanced collection.

R.L.Jordan

Rebecca Jordan
Head Teacher

Thorns Primary School, Thorns Road, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill, West Midlands, DY5 2JY

Tel: 01384 818285 Email: info@thorns-p.dudley.sch.uk Head Teacher: Mrs R Jordan