

Frettenham Primary School  
Hainford Primary School  
Horsford Primary School  
Old Catton Junior School  
White Woman Lane School  
St. Faiths' Primary School



Nebula  
where stars are born

Ashley Best-White  
Executive Headteacher

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Dear Parents/Carers

### **COVID-19 Update**

As we approach our next full week of school closures, I thought it might be useful to get in touch and keep you updated.

#### **School Closures**

Our schools are closed, except to those with an agreed emergency childcare place. Firstly, thank you to everyone who has made arrangements for their child as the safest place for them is at home. The best way to prevent unnecessary spread and any cross infection is for children to be at home, and for only those who are key workers in the fight against the coronavirus/Covid 19 to be using the emergency child care provision so we can keep it going.

If you need to contact us you must ring the appropriate school offices; White Woman Lane, Horsford primary (Mill Lane site) and St. Faiths' Primary School, as the other sites are now in lockdown. Please do check the websites first to find an answer to your question as we have minimal numbers of staff in order to carry out social distancing and minimise the risk of the spread of the disease.

#### **Thankyou**

A huge thank you to all of the parents and carers who are frontline key workers in the fight against this disease. Your contribution is much appreciated by us all, every day.

#### **Free School Meals**

There has been a great deal of discussion on free school meals in the media, on social media and between parents. Some parents are mistaken in thinking that all children in reception or key stage one will get a meal voucher or a food parcel as they do not pay for their lunches. **Please note this is not the case!**

To try to explain, all children in reception and key stage one schools get a daily free meal when school is open, but this is known as a Universal Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM) which is DIFFERENT to a Free School Meal (FSM).

It is only those who meet the criteria for a Free School Meal (FSM) who have any entitlement. Just because your child does not pay for meals in reception or key stage one, it does not mean they are free school meals. The Universal infant free School Meals (UIFSM) does not apply when schools are closed, even for those with an emergency child care space. Any parent who qualifies for free school meals (FSM) has already been contacted and informed about our arrangements for this. If you have not been contacted, you are not eligible and do not qualify.

Please note the national and local authority guidance on this has been, and continues to be, poor. They have not yet put anything in place for the voucher scheme for those eligible. We have no mechanism to buy these vouchers yet. We will keep you updated but please note that any provision, be it a packed lunch or a voucher does not apply in the school holidays. For those of you who are eligible for the free school meals, we will keep in touch when we have any new information. We are unable to supply vouchers currently but will keep in touch with those entitled to the free school meals directly about arrangements.

#### **Home Learning**

As a federation we are trying to take a sensible approach to the home learning. We know that the majority of parents are not teachers, and many parents are doing their very best to work at home with their children there. We know this is not easy as many of our staff are facing the same challenges in their families!

So, what we say to you is this:

- If you are doing your best, because you are working at home, have several children or just don't feel confident, then you are doing very well. Everyone is facing different challenges, but we have to acknowledge that every situation, every family and every child is different. You will all, I am sure, do your very best and that is all anyone can expect.
- Your prime concern at this time should be keeping you and your family as safe as you can. Don't get stressed or worried about school work! Everyone will do what they can. Watch a movie, practise some mindfulness activities, do some colouring! Just do all that you can to reassure your child in line with their age and needs.
- If your child needs a timetable, make one together. This could help, and you can adapt it according to your child's age or ability. You can include:
  - daily reading (use your own books or some of the free online books available).
  - read to your child whatever their age (we often read stories in school for all year groups, you are never too old to hear a story) . You could have a free audio book and listen to it together.
  - Daily maths. You can use the maths activities on our websites. You don't need to print anything – write it on a whiteboard, a chalkboard, a piece of paper or in a book. You can also do daily TT Rockstars if your child has this, as times tables are vital to a child's progress in maths, or start to learn their tables if they are ready.
  - Daily writing – be it a story, a diary, a book review, questions you would ask someone in an interview, a letter to someone in the family; get the children writing!
  - Something active. The Joe Wicks daily session is free on Youtube. If this is difficult, go in the garden and skip, run, play swingball. Anything active. We would do two hours minimum PE a week at school.
  - Look at Science – there are many activities on line for this.
  - Look at other subjects and what you can manage. You might find a History programme to watch together or that your child could watch, or a Geography programme. Many zoos are doing a virtual tour, as are art galleries, there is a lot to choose from and it is all learning.
  - Cook, do some gardening, paint, do a creative project linked to a topic.

Please note it is not reasonable to expect them to do a full day of learning, it is so much more intense than a day in school. Start at 9.00am if you can, do an hour, have a break and a snack, do a little more and then have a proper break and rest for lunch. In the afternoon, do a maximum of two hours with a built in break. No one knows what will happen, so the important thing is we all feel able to manage our own mental health and well-being and that of our families, and we all pace ourselves so we can get through this.

Keep yourselves and your families safe. Unless the children are in the garden, please don't send them outside in the public areas. We have been told some children are out on their bikes and this is most likely not advisable. We know they will find it difficult, but maybe consider a daily family walk for exercise, maintaining social distancing from other families. Children should not be meeting up with friends etc.

Our thoughts are with you and your families at this difficult time. If we all do the right thing as advised by the government, then we can help stop the spread of this disease. Thank you to all of the kind messages and support from parents and carers and a huge thank you to all of our staff who are doing their best to support children and families in this difficult time, as well as support and protect their own families, as well as those of you who are working tirelessly in the fight against this disease.

Take care everyone

Best wishes



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