

Seghill First School newsletter July 2020 edition 1

Dear Parents and Carers

As always, we hope you are all keeping well and staying safe.

We have welcomed more children in to school and we are operating two bubbles. The Reception / key stage 1 bubble is now full as we have reached the maximum number of pupils set by the government. No further changes will be made to the bubbles.

We are delighted to report that the **children and staff have been absolutely brilliant**. The children who have returned to school are getting more used to the routines that we have put in place to keep them safe. Keeping the children at distance from each other and applying the new cleaning regimes while teaching is not easy. However, everyone is in good spirits and the atmosphere in school is extremely positive.

We are working really hard with the children to remind them of the need to keep apart from their friends and staff. The **social distancing rule** may be being relaxed a bit from 2 metres to 1 metre, but it is still the rule and we have to try our best to follow it. We have put many measures in place to try to follow this rule in all parts of school. But they will be totally ineffective if children and staff are not following these guidelines at home. Please support us to keep everyone safe by continuing to follow this rule at home.

We cannot stress enough the importance of **engaging with remote learning**. The majority of children will not be returning to school until September so keeping up with the basic skills for their year group is really important. We are going to have to **remodel our curriculum** for September so children can catch up, but it is going to be a near impossible task for some children if they have not engaged with learning at home. We will be operating a **stage not age approach** to organising learning. This means that children will be taught in groups depending on where they are with their learning and not necessarily with only children in their class. Unfortunately, too many things are still up in the air for us to confirm these arrangements. The overriding factor in our decision making is always the safety of the children and the staff who are responsible for them. We will let you know what is happening but we are very much reliant on decisions from the government and the rules that we have to work within.

Please note that the **school office is open from 9:00am to 12 noon** each day. If you need to speak to Mrs Elliott, please do so between these times.

With love and best wishes to you all.

Miss Chappell and Mrs Hall
Headteacher and chair of governors

Advance notice about important changes to our service

From September, we will no longer be using **Parentmail**. Instead we will be using a different provider. This service will be used for sending texts and emails, all payments (dinner money, clubs, trips and events) and for managing attendance.

Please note that from 01 September, we will **no longer be accepting cash or cheque payments at the school office** for school meals, clubs, trips or events. You will need to pay for these using the app or online via our new provider. We will send out more details when installation of the new system has been completed. Please do not delete the Parentmail app or your account until we ask you to.

Transition arrangements for Year 4 children

Our programme of transition events for Year 4 will be very different this year to previous years. Please use the designated email address of the school your child will be going to if you have any questions or issues about transition that you would like to discuss-

SSMSttransition@svf.org.uk or WMSttransition@svf.org.uk

We will be going ahead with our **Year 4 leavers' party** on **Thursday 16 July**. Children and their parents are invited to attend their leavers' party from 6:00pm, which will hopefully take place in the middle garden. This will be arranged following social distancing guidelines. The event will include the opportunity to enjoy some of the elements that are usually in their leavers' assembly, plus have food with their parents and staff. We will send out more details later, but please make a note of this date.

Birthdays

Our birthday boys and girls in the second half of June are-

- Angel in orange class aged 4;
- Tia and Dylan in red class aged 6.



Happy birthday to you all. Birthdays for July will be included in our next newsletter.

Remote learning using pupil packs

Teachers spend a huge amount of time putting together and printing out pupil packs in paper format. Packs have been made available at the school office for collection and delivered to children's homes. Teachers are doing this in addition to teaching the children attending school and planning remote learning on School360 and Tapestry.

This is a reminder of how we operate-

- teachers will only provide paper copies of pupils packs when the previous pupil pack has been completed to the best of each child's ability and returned to school or uploaded onto School360 or Tapestry.
- parents can collect pupil packs from the school office between 9:00am and noon. This is the only time that there is access to the school office.
- pupil packs will only be delivered by staff by prior arrangement to a family who are shielding.
- learning tasks and activities in pupil packs are designed to meet the needs of children in each year group. Teachers cannot produce packs that are personalised to the individual needs of each pupil.

Children learn by being shown how to do something and practising it. If your child is struggling with a particular task, please use the suggested resources and websites in the packs, or use one of the many websites that have been created.

A list of DfE websites are on our **school website** in the **Covid-19 information** tab in the **general resources for children** folder.

Please contact class teachers directly using these addresses-

anna.bell1@school360.co.uk

amanda.lyons@school360.co.uk

pamela.knowles@school360.co.uk

sarah.kembrey@school360.co.uk

hannah.askew@school360.co.uk

Vacancy for a parent governor

We will have a vacancy for a **parent governor** from September. This is because one of our parent governors, **Alison Hunter**, will be at the end of her term of office. Alison's son is now at middle school so she is not eligible for re-election as a parent governor.

So, what's it like being a school governor?

Well, actually, it's great! We have a group of dedicated governors who have the interests of the school at heart. It can be very satisfying as we are all involved and know what's happening. It can be very enjoyable and you will get to work with very nice people.

It is, of course, also a very important post- one that should be taken seriously. Our job is to work alongside the Headteacher to ensure that the school is the best it can be. This includes looking at school standards, budgeting, resourcing, the building, safeguarding- just to mention a few things.

What is the time- commitment?

To a degree that is up to you, but the minimum governors do is one committee meeting half-termly and a Full Governing Body meeting termly, both no more than 2 hours in length. Each governor also has a 'link-governor' role meaning you may work with another governor or member of staff on such things as attendance, safeguarding or teaching and learning. This may take up a bit more time but it is dependent on the role. Some governors do more, some less but each of us gives as much as we can.

I have no experience as a governor. Is this a problem?

No, not at all- we will train you, although we would welcome experienced governors as well.

What qualifications/ skills do I need?

Life experience and a willingness to make a commitment.

You also need to have a full understanding of the importance of confidentiality. As a parent governor, you need to recognise that you are working for the whole school and not just your child.

Do I need to have an educational background?

No. Whilst we welcome people who do, it is also very important that we have people with a range of skills beyond the area of education. In this way, we get different perspectives, knowledge and skills. We are particularly keen to hear from parents with skills to complement our existing team. We would encourage parents with expertise in the field of finance (such as financial planning and management, procurement and purchasing and premises and facilities management) and/or human resources to apply.

Who can apply?

Any parent or guardian of a child from Reception to Year 4 in our school can apply for the parent governor role.

What happens next?

If you are interested, firstly let Miss Chappell know. After that, I will meet with you for a chat about the role and what you can offer, and so that you can decide if it is something you would like to do. Once this is done, it will be put to other parents who get the chance to vote. In the event of more than one application, parents will be asked to vote for their preferred candidate. You will be DBS-checked.

I hope this helps. If you would like to meet to chat through any points, please do let Miss Chappell, or myself know.

Regards, Steph Hall (Chair)

Staffing update

Mrs Watson will be returning to work from maternity leave during the next week. We have been in touch throughout her maternity leave and she is looking forward to coming back to school and seeing everyone.

Mrs Whitelaw continues to be absent because of her very sore hip. **Mrs Knowles** has recovered from her broken wrist and has had her cast removed.

Mrs Hedley, Mrs Mullen and **Miss Ornsby** are all well but are not at work at the moment as we are not using lunchtime supervisors to care for the children over lunchtime.

Apart from that, we are thankful to have everyone fit and well and available to work in school to support learning.

Term dates for 2020 – 2021 and 2021 - 2022

Headteachers in Seaton Valley have agreed the training days for the next two academic years. These dates have been added to the **term dates and school holiday lists**. They can be found on the **school website** in the **virtual office tab** in the **term dates folder**.

Please check both documents, especially if you are planning to book a family holiday, so you know when children are on holiday from school to make your plans.

Our term dates and holiday dates are quite different to schools in Newcastle and other neighbouring authorities in 2020 to 2021, including dates for the return to school in September 2020, Easter 2021 and end of summer term 2021.

Free school meals vouchers

The government recently announced that they will be providing **vouchers** for children who are eligible for **free school meals** over the summer holidays.

I received guidance yesterday about how this will work. My understanding is that parents will receive a £90 voucher for each child eligible for Free School Meals. I will be in touch when I have read the guidance fully to let you know how this will work.

Please note that these vouchers are for children on income related Free School Meals and nothing to do with Universal Infant Free School Meals which are provided by the government for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Digital boards

I am delighted to announce that we have installed brand new **digital boards** in all our classrooms. The interactive whiteboards and projectors have been removed and replaced with shiny new digital boards. They use the latest technology and are connected directly to the PC, meaning we no longer need ceiling mounted projectors. The quality of what we see on the screen is a massive improvement compared to what we could see on the interactive whiteboards. I'm sure the staff and the children will love them. I am definitely going to need to start my training on them now to get myself up to speed for using them in September!