



# Spring Half Term School Update

As we approach half term there is still some uncertainty about how and when we reopen the school although we know it is not until at least 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Below we have provided you with some information and advice that we hope you find helpful.

## **Children's Mental Health Week**

The theme this year is Express Yourself, where children are being encouraged to think about finding a creative outlet to help manage their mental health. We can use creativity as a healthy way to express feelings and emotions good examples are physical activity, art, drama, music, creative writing, dance, song, knitting, crafting, sculpting etc. Further information and support for Parents and children can be found at <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/>

During the week there are a number of activities taking place for the children. On Friday the final day we encourage children to **Dress to Express Yourself**. This is just a fun activity the whole family can get involved in at home.

## **Remote Learning**

We continue to receive extremely positive comments about our remote learning offer and are very proud of how well children and families are engaging with this. As we are becoming familiar with our new way of learning it is worth perhaps mentioning the learning environment. We appreciate that families have different circumstances and the following may not always be possible but please try to ensure the children have:

- A place without too many distractions to work eg a TV on in the background or siblings not working trying to distract them.
- Good timekeeping - lateness causes disruption to everyone else in the lesson and leaves children feeling unsure and worried about what they have missed.
- Independence, children of all ages should be doing the work themselves and should not need a parent to help them. The teaching staff are highly skilled at supporting and helping the children. We appreciate the youngest children may need support with the technology.
- Encouragement to try. Children learn by making mistakes indeed they should be making them, a simple you try or ask your teacher should be all that is required.

A variety of help and support for families is available if you need anything please ask.

The government also has lots of help on its website here is a link you may find useful.

<https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/about-increasing-mobile-data>

## **Staff Testing**

All school staff have now been issued with home testing kits and are being tested on a regular basis as another measure to stop the spread of Covid-19.

## **School Website**

We are continuing to update our website on a regular basis with everything from Coronavirus updates to general advice on managing a new way of life during this pandemic.



### February Half Term

School will not be open during this half term period, the government have advised it is not necessary for school to be open to anyone during this time.

### Food Parcels & Utility Assistance

School will not be providing FSM vouchers during half term, instead the government have created a wider scheme to support families called 'Covid Winter Grant Scheme'. These are the same as the ones provided at Christmas and will be given out to families on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February.

### Contact Tracing during Half Term

Schools continue to play an important role in contact tracing for pupils and staff who continue to attend school. Where pupils and staff test positive for Covid-19 during the holidays, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, then school is not required to take any action. If staff or pupils develop symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, then school will take action and assist in identifying close contacts and advising on isolating. Please inform the school of any positive Covid-19 cases using the email [parents@thornhill.durham.sch.uk](mailto:parents@thornhill.durham.sch.uk) after this period support will be provided by the NHS track and trace service.

### Pupil Assessment

Whilst National Y6 and Y2 SATs as well as the Y1 Phonics tests have been cancelled for this year, all other usual school assessment will take place. The Y4 National Times Tables check is not affected. We will still have internal Y6 and Y2 tests as well as a Y1 phonics check. We can also still provide parents with accurate information about how well your child is doing in school in the usual written report to parents at the end of the year. We are also continuing our careful tracking of children's progress and where children have fallen behind the Government is expecting children to take part in extra catch up programmes outside of school time to ensure no child gets left behind. We will also still provide the usual assessment information to any schools where a child is transferring e.g. Y6 moving to secondary school. It is very important to us that we provide all children with the best education possible and any disruption to learning is minimised as much as possible by the current situation.

Should you have any questions regarding anything in this update please give our school office a call and we will be more than happy to help you: 01388 772 906.

### Important dates for the diary:

Holiday Dates for your information		
	School Closes	School re-opens
Spring half term	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> February	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February
Easter	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> March	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> April
May Day	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> April	Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> May
Summer Half Term	Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> May	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> June
Summer Holiday	Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> July	To be advised