



Harriers Banbury Academy

an Aspirations Academy

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Alex Pearson – Executive Principal

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you following the Prime Minister's announcement that the majority of pupils will not be returning to schools in England until 8th March at the earliest. Whilst this was not surprising news and we must continue to protect the NHS, it is disappointing that we cannot welcome all of our pupils back to Harriers sooner.

Now we know that we have another four weeks of home learning at least, as well as half term, we have started to re-evaluate our remote learning provision to ensure it is suitable for an extended period of use. Our first amendment is to review the amount of time pupils are required to spend on a screen in order to complete our home learning activities. We believe Loom videos and similar remain the best way to engage and lead learning remotely, but we are also concerned about the amount of time that pupils, staff and parents spend on a device. We are, therefore, introducing 'Screen Free Friday' where activities set do not require a device. The staff have already started collating ideas for fun, engaging activities that are screen free. We will also need to move some live sessions; class teachers will confirm this individually, and my assemblies will now be sent out on a Monday.

It has been lovely to see the work steadily flow in from pupils in all year groups, via Seesaw or Tapestry. I have been impressed with the standard of the work presented by many pupils and the teachers have clearly set interesting activities that have engaged the pupils. Thank you to all parents and family members who have supported your child's learning. We know it is a challenge! Many members of staff are also supporting their own children's learning at home, and we could not be delivering our curriculum so well without your support.

We have been working hard to support all pupils and families through this lockdown, and beyond. We know access to the internet and digital devices has been an issue and we have now loaned out over 30 chromebooks to families that need them. Thank you to those of you who have also donated devices you no longer use. These have all been redistributed to very grateful families. We are providing vouchers via the free school voucher scheme; please contact the office via email if you need support with this. With the aid of over £300 in donations from friends of Harriers, our 'Community Cupboard' is also up and running in the bike shelter near the office, for any parents that are finding they need some additional help to feed their families during this difficult time.

In school, key worker and vulnerable pupils are completing work set via Seesaw/Tapestry and are all working very hard. Staff are working on a rota basis so they can support pupils learning at home and in school. This week staff have started using lateral flow tests, provided by the government, so we all test ourselves twice a week. It has been very reassuring to know that we are only in school after testing negative. We have had one member of staff test positive this month, but this member of staff had no close contact with anyone in school.

We have everything crossed that the data will tell the government that we can welcome all pupils back in March. In the meantime, we will prepare for all eventualities and continue to be here to support all of our pupils.

Thank you for all of your kind comments. Please contact us via email if you need educational or other support. Stay safe.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Pearson, Executive Principal



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