



Spring Term Newsletter

End of Week 8 of 11

March 5th 2021



Dear parents/carers

Today marks the end of what I sincerely hope will be our last school closure and the beginning of a return to more normal times in school and for everyone at home. Yesterday in school had an end-of-term feel and I know that all staff and hopefully all children are looking forward to a new start on Monday. Staff are currently working hard to have school ready for everyone returning on Monday.

I know I have said it before in Newsletters, and if you were able to hear me in this week's Celebration Assemblies, then you have heard me say it out loud. But I must say it again. Thank you to every parent, carer, grandma, graddad, uncle, auntie, child minder, big brother, big sister... for your efforts since Christmas. The staff of SBPS have been truly amazed by the levels of engagement of our home-learners and by the quality of learning that has taken place at home. Our government tasked UK schools to provide a quality remote education for those children not allowed to access in-school provision. I know that the staff, children and families of Shotley Bridge Primary school have provided exactly that. I am so proud of my team and our children and we are so grateful for what the at-home adults have done. I now switch off the news when I hear of catch-up. The skills we have all learned and mastered as a result of school closure will be life-long skills. SBPS children are more ready, not less ready for what life has to throw at them as a result.

Of course, many children will be anxious about returning on Monday. Many children who have been on-site may be anxious about having 30 children in their class when they have got used to half of that. Please see Mrs Dryden's Eduspot email from Tuesday 2nd March with some good help regarding such worries. From staff's recent experience of children who have returned to in-school provision in the last few weeks and from personal experience of having to return after shielding throughout March to July, we know that the run-up to Monday will be daunting for some. We also know that for the vast majority, myself included, that those fears quickly disappeared once back through the school gates with familiar friends and adults. We will look after every child and every staff member. We also know that home-educator adults will find Monday daunting too. You will all be in well-established routines and having your little ones at home for all this time will have been a lovely experience for you too. Easter holidays are only 3 weeks away. We can treat this as a lovely, short half term.

LFTs. Staff have now been taking Lateral Flow Tests at home, twice a week, for 6 weeks. All tests have been negative. No child in-school, or family member of a child in school has had to be tested and we have not had to close any year-groups at all since Christmas. Please continue to follow the procedures we have followed since September regarding staying at home and keeping children at home if any household member has symptoms and is awaiting test results. These will continue to be marked as authorised absences due to covid procedures. The government is to make LFTs available to adults in families of UK school children. (NOT FOR Primary aged children!) These LFTs are NOT available through school. Adults must obtain these through government recommended means.

Some more normal Newsletter items.

Literacy week in Shotley Bridge Primary School. This week, learning across school - from Reception to Year 6 - has been linked to the book 'After the Fall' by Dan Santat, which has an important message of resilience and determination. The children have learned about growth mindset.

They have; made paper aeroplanes; written sequel stories; looked after 'egg friends'; participated in egg drops; created comic strips; created 'book in a box' displays; along with many more egg-stremlly egg-sellent activities! The engagement of the children in school and at home has impressed all of the staff! Alongside this, the children have been set a selection of daily challenges. We have loved seeing the pictures of the children taking part in the extreme reading and recreate a book cover challenge! We have all been on the edge of our seats this week waiting for the daily installments of 'The Masked Reader'. The children's reactions to the big reveal were priceless! We have had a big clear out of lots of old books and text books. These have been donated to a charity called 'Books2Africa' who transport books to African schools who need them. Both libraries have been replenished with lots of exciting new books for the children to read! Miss Reid

International Womens' Day and Mothers' Day. Both of these important days take place next week. We will celebrate them in school and hopefully share with you what we do. Watch this space.

Waterbottles. Names in uniforms, shoes and coats. Please bring your water bottles back to school on Monday. Please check ALL your clothing is named to ensure it does not get lost. Children regularly take off sweatshirts, cardigans, jumpers etc... Shoes are removed regularly too and don't always return to the correct wearer!

Medicines. Parents/carers with medicines in school will have already been contacted by Mrs parker and Mrs Coombe if medicines in school need replacing/are out of date. Any parents/carers with new medicines will need to fill in a form on Monday. Please remember we will only administer medicines such as antibiotics that have to be taken 4 or more times a day.

After-school clubs. Trips. Residentials. As and when we are able to return to all of these things we will do. There will definitely be none between now and Easter. We will keep you informed as and when we know more.

Some big staffing news. Mrs Lamb leaves us at Easter. Mrs Lamb joined us ten years ago and will be a huge miss to all the staff, children and families of Shotley Bridge Primary school. I will say more about Mrs Lamb nearer to Easter but suffice to say, she has been pivotal in the ethos, growth, happiness and success of Shotley Bridge Primary School. We will all miss her terribly but are excited for her as she begins her next adventures.

Enjoy this weekend.

Thank you to every boy and girl for your positivity, humour, resilience, talents, skills, creativity, efforts etc... etc... every day.

We can not wait to see you all on Monday.

Take care.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Bell