

29th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am sure that you are aware of the announcement from the Prime Minister earlier this week that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term. Instead they hope it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools from Monday 8th March, once everyone in the four most vulnerable groups have received their first dose of the vaccine. The Government have pledged to give us two weeks' notice of this in order to make the necessary arrangements, so we will keep you informed of any further developments.

I am sure that some of you are feeling quite worried about this news and are not relishing the thought of more weeks of home learning. Please know that we are here if you need to talk, ask questions or share concerns. Once the children have returned to school, we will reassess their knowledge and understanding and identify any gaps in learning. The following weeks will then be used to address these gaps through targeted teaching and intervention groups, with the aim that all children are still on track to achieve the same progress by the end of the year that they would have made if schools had remained open as usual.

Healthy House Challenge

During the final week of this half term (8th - 12th February) we would like to collect in all the children's books & folders that they are currently using for their work. Class teachers will be in touch regarding arrangements for dropping off and collecting these in due course. Teachers will look at all the home learning completed so far and provide some feedback to the children - this will be in the form of an over-arching comment focusing on their effort and the quality of their work.

We are very conscious of the extra screen-time currently being experienced by the children and how families are not able to get out and about as normal. As the week beginning 8th February is 'Feeling Good Week', we wanted to alter the arrangements slightly for this week, so the children have some different challenges and there is an extra emphasis on the importance of wellbeing and physical activity.

We have decided to launch a special 'Healthy House Challenge' during this week. Each child must choose 1 day (or the equivalent of) to complete the challenge between Monday 8th - Wednesday 10th February inclusive - we didn't want to set one particular date as we are aware that you all have your own commitments. Teachers will set 2 days' worth of work to complete over this 3-day period, in addition to the Healthy House Challenge.

All children will be encouraged to earn points for their House through participating in a range of healthy activities that are suitable for those children engaging in remote learning as well as those within our critical worker bubbles. The children will be able to choose from the selection of activities and will be awarded points accordingly.

We will also encourage children to find their own creative ways of keeping fit, and our panel of 'judges' will award points accordingly for any activities that your children create and complete.

The children will be given a Healthy House Challenge Sheet (please see attached), where they can highlight the activities that they complete and turn it in remotely via Google Classroom. They will then need to submit their points total using a Google Form (you will be sent the link for this nearer the time). All results must be submitted by 4pm on Wednesday 10th and the winners will be announced in the Celebration Assembly on Friday 12th February.

We will be creating a display board in school to reflect the children's achievements, so please do take some photos of your child's efforts during the Healthy House Challenge Day and email them to admin@skyswood.herts.sch.uk.

There will be some additional activities scheduled during the week, such as 'fitness workouts' with Mr Oswin and Mrs Lewis and tasks related to 'Feeling Good Week'. All of these will be set via Google Classroom as normal. Teachers will continue to set classwork in addition to these activities, so there will be a nice balance to end the half term on a high.

As an end to the week, Mr Bridle is organising a family quiz night for Friday 12th February 6pm-8pm - details of this will follow.

Name the 'Houses' Competition

Next week, we are running a competition to rename the 'Houses' that we use in Skyswood. Sandringham, Buckingham, Balmoral and Windsor will be re-named by the children themselves so they have ownership and the names are more relevant to them. Mr Bridle will post details of this competition on Monday 1st February on the school website. These names will then be used the following week during the Healthy House Challenge.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

The EEF has produced a range of resources for parents and carers, to help you support your children's learning while schools are closed to most pupils. Click on the link and scroll down to the 'Support resources for schools to share with parents' section:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-for-schools/>

We hope you have a positive week ahead and I will be in touch again next week before the Challenge Day commences. Despite the pressures, we really are so impressed by the quality of work being submitted - this is true for both children who are attending school and those learning remotely. Thank you so much for your continued input in your child's learning - it is your commitment to supporting your child with their remote education that is making this so successful and we truly appreciate your support. Have a lovely weekend.

Lisa Spiller

(Assistant Head Teacher)