

Knowing Every Child – Inspiring Every Mind – Achieving Every Day

Friday 24th July 2020



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Have a Good Summer Holiday Message from the Headteacher

As I write to all parents today, I have to say just how proud I am of our whole school community. We had virtually all of our school back in during the summer term, including most of the Year 2s who will be become Year 3 in September. From our Key Worker groups who started on March 23rd, to Year 6s from June 3rd, to Year 5s from July 1st and most other year groups through the carefully socially distanced picnics, the look on the children's faces when they saw their friends and our staff was absolutely delightful to see.



I must thank you, our parents and carers, for the sterling support and patience with the plethora of Home Learning and the detailed arrangements for bringing the children safely back into school. Your ability to give your children their education during Lockdown must be applauded. 😊 I know how tough it has been for many families, especially if you've also been trying to keep the wheels of the country turning with your own jobs. This has truly been a community effort and no mistake.

All I know at this stage is that next academic year will continue to be very unusual for us all. Despite the government's intention that schools should now have a rest over the summer, we have already been operational this week for two days of the summer holiday, with children in school yesterday and today. We have been making preparations for the 5-week long holiday club starting this Monday coming, (run by CM Sports) to ensure children and staff using our site remain safe. We have many deliveries of equipment, including new tables and some chairs for all classes so that every child has their very own tray under their desk. These will need unwrapping, checked and distributed to all classes. Perspex screens will be put in place in the foyer, an additional staff toilet installed to keep bubbles for staffing in place, washer/dryer facilities for extra hygiene, external sinks for extra handwashing installed and so on. I think you get the point that a safe start for September 7th won't just happen by magic!

I'm immensely proud of the staff and governors who have worked tirelessly in these turbulent times, to keep our school open every single week throughout Lockdown. We even opened on one of the three Bank Holidays this term! Between them, they have gone the extra mile both at home and at school. At times, I have sensed that they didn't really want to take any unnecessary risks, but they have turned up at the school anyway. When I reflect on the people we have at Herne and their unwavering commitment, it pleasantly reminds me why I have never felt the need to be anywhere else myself.

Have a great summer holiday, whether at home or away, and keep safe. Myself and all of the staff are absolutely sincere when we say that we look forward to having all of the children back in September. We can then navigate our way safely through the autumn term with your support and keep everyone SAFE, WELL and give the children a fantastic year full of LEARNING, FRIENDSHIP and ENJOYMENT

Best wishes and Keep Safe. Tony Markham.

Thank You for Your Gifts and Donations

We have had so many gifts given to the staff, goodies delivered to the staffrooms (yes, we now have two places for staff where we've kept Y5 and Y6 separate from the Key Worker groups) and £400 in donations. £100 from the Soden Family (Sam) and £100 from the Reid Family (Alex)! Thank you so much for these gifts. In particular, we would like to thank the Grant Family (Theo and Emelia) whose parents have donated £200 which has bought 50 medical grade reusable visors (designed by Airbus) for the staff to use from September onwards. These have been produced by Pressco Precision Engineering Ltd., a local firm based in Hilsea, who have agreed to provide these to the school at a 50% saving. Thank you all for this fantastic support. 😊



Face Coverings Feedback

As a precaution for the safe opening of our school in September, last week, we were asking all children to bring a face covering to school for at least the first half-term (to be reviewed regularly in light of the national picture and government guidance).



This move on the part of our school has prompted several parents to contact the school, leading to two very clear differences of thought on this measure.

- **Great idea**, as this will keep everyone a little safer when the classrooms are full of children
- **Bad idea**, as there is no way to make sure that children won't lose them, share them, touch them, making them pointless to use. It is also NOT government guidance for those under the age of 11.

Face Coverings at Herne – What Next?

In light of the feedback from parents and our further investigation into the pros and cons of face coverings, we are putting forward the following information:

- The government published its latest guidance yesterday (July 23rd 2020) and here is the link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#:~:text=Face%20coverings%20are%20not%20required,supermarkets%20or%20indoor%20shopping%20centres.&text=Employees%20should%20continue%20to%20follow,a%20face%20covering%20by%20law.>
- An academic report published online from the leading UK medical journal, The Lancet (June 1st 2020) and funded by the World Health Organisation, can be viewed here:
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext#seccestitle140](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext#seccestitle140)
- Debate and further information can be found from the Los Angeles Times in the USA is here:
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-19/everything-you-need-to-know-about-californias-mada>

We do take seriously the mental health and well-being of the children and that, by insisting on face coverings, this could make them worry, especially if they are new to the school. Therefore, we would like to take up the following position at this time:

We would like parents to have in-hand the provision of a face covering for their child, in preparation for the school opening on September 7th.

We will make a definitive final decision on this matter on Friday September 4th on the Herne Flyer published on that day.

On balance, by delaying making a final decision, we can all be better informed of any other research or national developments in tackling the virus, look at how exactly we would manage this at the school if we proceeded with it, and make sure that we are clear of the benefits (or otherwise) to all children and staff. The picture of Quince Class, as it will be set up for September, shows just how close children will be to each other within their class bubbles (the trays will slide under the tops of the desks). There will be NO SOCIAL DISTANCING and, if you went to any inside public place from today, like a shop, pub, shopping centre etc., it is mandatory to wear a mask over the age of 11 unless there is a medical reason not to do so.



This latest guidance from the government is a complete u-turn from their position on face coverings from just a few months ago! So what has changed their mind, you have to ask? Without straying into the details of that, we just think that if parents are prepared for the possibility of us requesting face coverings now in July, it will come as no surprise if, as a society, most of us are forced into the habit of wearing them in our normal daily lives when outside of our homes when September comes...blimey!! Decisions, decisions!

Other Frequently Asked Questions About September - Our Responses

Q. Will children only be allowed to go to the toilet in their designated time slots?

A. No. Classes do have specific time slots where the teachers will encourage the children to go. However, if a child needs the toilet they will be able to go outside these time slots, with an adult taking them to their allocated toilet, where possible. We have had to allocate slots as Lower School only have one boy's toilet block (shared by Year 3 and Year 4) and Upper School only have one girls' toilet block (shared by Year 5 and Year 6). The designated time slots are to help avoid year group bubbles using the toilets in large numbers at the same time.



Q. Why are children allowed to bring lunchboxes and water bottles, but not a bag?

A. The majority of our cloakrooms are shared amongst different classes and even year groups, so we want to cut down any potential opportunities where class bubbles can have contact with each other. All lunchboxes have their own class section in our lunch crates and all water bottles will be safely stored in class. If you are worried about your child being able to carry their lunchbox and water bottle, using a plastic bag that they can neatly fold in their tray, or even better, using their Herne Junior School PE bag (which can also be neatly folded into their tray) is **absolutely fine**. On Fridays, a bag (plastic or PE bag) is encouraged as we are asking for their home-link books to come in to school at the end of the week.

Q. Are Year 6 children allowed to pick up a sibling?

A. Yes. They will have to come out of their Year 6 external door and join the one-way system to collect their brother or sister. If you would like your Year 6 child to do this, you must email us to let us know this arrangement (remember to state if you would like them to leave at 3.30 or 3.40pm). Email: admin@hernejunior.com

Although this appears to break a bubble, it is clear that, once the children return home, they effectively compromise the bubble arrangement anyway. In all of our efforts, we are aiming to minimise the risk of transmission, but we cannot eradicate all risk, no matter how much we try.

Q. Will the children stay in their class bubbles for the entire year because my child has friends in other classes?

A. In all likelihood, this will not be the case. Public Health England keep in touch with the Local Authority and headteachers and we are updated with local East Hants data from time-to-time. If we have information that the R number is down to levels below 0.5, that will be a sign that we can relax some of our more stringent measures, just like we have witnessed on a national level lately.

Goodbyes

Firstly, we say a very sad goodbye to three long serving teachers: Mrs Meckiffe, Mrs Burgess and Mr Choularton. I am sure parents and children have endless positive memories about all three fantastic members of staff and they will be so very missed. A special mention must go to Mrs Meckiffe who has dedicated 24 years of her life to the children of Herne, the whole school community is so grateful for your dedicated service to the school.



In addition to the teaching staff, we also say a fond farewell to Mrs Dibb, Mrs Turner and Mrs Roberts. Between these three wonderful LSAs they have amassed over 50 years of supporting the children of Herne. They will all be really missed by the staff & children and we thank them for their incredible commitment to the school.

Finally, we say goodbye to our very lovely Year 6 cohort. Whether at home or on their June/July return to school, we have been so proud of how they've coped with this extraordinary year. It has demonstrated to us their amazing maturity and reliance in the most exceptional circumstances. We will certainly miss you all and wish you the very best of luck for your new ventures at your next schools. 😊

Monday 7th September and Tuesday 8th September

For the first two days of the Autumn term, we are going to extend our collection window to test our new system of picking up the children. **You will be allowed to pick up your child in the window 3pm – 4pm.** This is just for the first two days, then our plan is from Wednesday 9th September we will use the narrower window of anytime between 3.15 – 3.45pm.



Covid-19 Support for Parents

We have set up a new page on our website under the Parent Tab named 'Covid 19', which has an array of support and advice documents for parents and pupils. These documents include well being, advice on handwashing, returning to school advice, Covid testing social stories and lots more. We hope this will be of great support both over the summer and during the autumn term.

One suggestion that has been put forward to us is whether parents, carers and friends of the school would be happy to make face masks for adults or children which we could then distribute to families who may struggle to buy masks for all of their family. If you think you could help, please get in touch on admin@hernejunior.com This doesn't presume that we'll insist on masks at Herne at this point in time, but this is a contingency for if we do.

Next Flyer on August 28th – Herne Flyer Number 1!

On our FIRST Flyer of the new academic year on Friday August 28th, we'll publish the maps and other reminders for the start back to school in September. This is partly driven by the fact that we're still trying to work through the safest routes and regimes for a safe start to school in September. In the meantime, we will continue to Tweet any updates and breaking news via our Twitter feed, so please Follow us on Twitter if you'd like to be bang up to date! 😊 **Twitter: @HerneJunior**



Where to Find Previous Herne Flyers



If parents wish to track back through all of this year's Flyers, especially the more recent ones regarding our opening in September, please go to our website www.hernejunior.com and go to the 'News & Events' tab. On the drop-down bar there is a link called 'Friday Flyer – Archive' and you can access every single Flyer from the academic year 2019 – 2020. 😊

Year 6 Only Section for September (Repeat)

For those Year 6 children returning to school in September, we would like to give them the chance to walk to and from school either from home or from a meeting place where their parents may drop them off or collect them, e.g. near a local shop. In order to make this safe, we need to know who may want to do this, mainly for going home. If you think your child might want to do this, could you please email us on admin@hernejunior.com before Friday September 4th. Your email needs to include: Child Name, Class, where they are meeting you or if they are going to walk all the way home. Children that will do this will be released from their Year 6 class at 3.30pm or 3.40pm. Please state which you would prefer in your email. If you wish to collect your Year 6 child from the external classroom door (like the rest of the school), this would be okay with us (3.15 – 3.45).

In addition to the small pencil case, **we would like Year 6 to have their own small mini dictionary.** The preferred one is the Oxford English Mini Dictionary (currently £3.74 on Amazon). Other mini dictionaries that have 90,000+ words would be acceptable as well. These will stay at school in their trays and will be used every day as part of our morning work to extend their vocabulary.

Twilight and Breakfast Clubs

Thank you to all of the parents who returned their applications for Twilight Club by Wednesday 22nd July. We can confirm that everyone who has applied has got their place as requested! 😊 Don't forget that Breakfast Club (7.30am start) can be accessed on an ad hoc basis by just turning up on the day and that we'll invoice you later, as we do not want to handle cash at this time.

FSM Vouchers for the Summer Holidays

This is just to confirm that the government has funded Free School Meal vouchers over the summer holiday period. If you have been receiving these vouchers by email, continue to keep your eye on your emails as there will be another 6 week's worth to come until schools return.



Are You Interested in Being a Parent Governor from September?

With the significant challenges ahead, we are looking for TWO new Parent Governors to join our governing body in September. If you think you would be interested in this role and would like to find out more, look out for our first Flyers in September when you'll have details of what is involved. In the meantime, if you'd like to signal an interest, please email admin@hernejunior.com and we'll make a note of your name for next term. Thank you.

'WorthLess?' Campaign Regarding Formal Testing in 2021



Mr Markham has worked with other headteachers up and down the country over the last three years to improve the funding of schools. He is the representative of 'WorthLess?' for all Hampshire schools, including academies, secondary, primary and special schools. As part of a grass roots national campaign, headteachers released the following earlier this month calling for extensive changes to examinations and Year 6 SATS for all pupils next year.

Headteachers representing thousands of schools across the country are calling on the government to make far-reaching changes to primary school assessments (SATS), GCSE and A-Level examinations set for the summer of 2021. After months of lost learning time - following the pandemic - and the prospect of further disruption to teaching and learning amidst local lockdowns, headteachers require the government to review and overhaul league tables and examinations relating to the Summer series 2021. In addition, the government must take decisive action to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils from Reception to Year 13. Without significant adjustments to assessments and examinations their mental health and emotional wellbeing will severely and negatively affected in the forthcoming academic year.

'Worth Less?' is a non-political campaign group that represents thousands of headteachers from 78 Local Authorities and London boroughs from Cornwall to Cumbria.

Summer Reading Challenge

The library service usually run a summer reading challenge every year to get children to come to the library over the summer holidays. This year they have launched an online version where children can register and read challenge books online. Follow this link for more information:

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/news/general/silly-squad-coming-soon>



Read, Read, Read!

Over the summer holidays, we would love every child to read as much as possible because this is one of the hardest things to help children to catch up with once they're back in school. If your child has run out of reading books, do not panic! Our school library is linked to a website called **'Wheeler's'** where all our pupils can borrow digital books and audiobooks (all for free). It is a fantastic resource and well worth a visit. To start using the service:

- Go to <https://help.eplatform.co/hc/en-us/articles/115003984988-Downloading-Mobile-Apps> Select which version (Windows, Apple...etc.) you want and let it load. It will then tell you to launch it. It will tell you to find your library. Type in 'Herne Junior' in the long blue bar and 'Herne Junior School' will appear. Click on it. The username and password is the same as Education City. (Enjoy! 😊)
- www.stories.audible.com has a range of free audiobooks for children, including all the Harry Potter books. All books can be instantly streamed, with no login required and no downloading.
- **Oxford Owl** have now launched FREE e-books too! Go to this link: <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/books/free-ebooks/>

Have a safe and restful summer and we'll look forward to seeing you all back at school on September 7th 2020.

Don't forget to look out for our first TWO Flyers on Friday 28th August and Friday 4th September before the children return. They will include the latest information about fighting the virus and keeping safe, as well as the organisation for a safe return to Herne in the new term.

Best wishes from all of the staff and governors at Herne. 😊

