



Highfields Academy

Together we inspire, always aiming higher

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Good morning everyone,

Well another week has passed, six weeks now since the school closed for the majority of you. There has been a lot of talk in the papers and on television about when schools will reopen but so far there has been no official announcement of a date when this is intended to happen. I think the only thing that we can say for sure is that when this day does arrive it will not be a case of 'return to normal' with all pupils back in full time. My guess (and it is a guess) is that normality is not likely to be the case until September but that as we approach summer a phased opening will begin to take place. I promise to keep you up to date with anything that I hear as I know you will all be eager to know what the plans are, so are we.

On Wednesday the Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson made a speech about the reopening of schools. I'm sure many of you will have seen this on the news but I have copied and pasted it below for you in case you missed it.

Music resources for next week:

The Love Music Trust have sent us the information regarding online learning opportunities next week:

Home' lessons

- EYFS/KS1 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_59QYVqzBTI
- KS2 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21emXnGfmNI>

Daily Big Sing

- Monday - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZfkeWoLo9E>
- Tuesday - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGADPcOFbcg>
- Wednesday - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmPB8W4kli4>
- Thursday - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsuNbapcxgs>
- Friday - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WctklwV35h8>

Please also find attached to the email two PDFs:

- A worksheet (song lyrics) required for next week's KS2 home lesson
- Lesson plans for next week's live lessons

We have also uploaded onto the website (Covid 19 tab on the homepage) a fantastic resource pack for all children to access. It has been produced by Daybell & Choo opticians and contains lots of fun activities for your children to have a go at; it's definitely worth a look at.

Take care everyone, have a good weekend and keep safe.

Simon Dyson

Gavin Williamson's speech on Wednesday:

Schools across England that have been closed for almost six weeks as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown will reopen in phases, with headteachers given as much notice as possible, the education secretary, Gavin Williamson, has said.

The secretary of state would not give a date for reopening, but ruled out schools opening during the summer holidays as a way of helping pupils who have missed out on education to catch up.

Questioned by the education select committee on Wednesday, Williamson told MPs: "We recognise that the idea of schools all returning on day one with the full complement of pupils is not realistic or practical.

"I do expect schools to be opened in a phased manner. I also intend to be giving schools as much notice as possible."

There has been continuing speculation about when schools might reopen, and whether older year groups, including pupils in their final year of primary school and those in the middle of GCSE and A-level courses could be among the first to be brought back into schools as they might benefit most.

Asked which pupils might return first, the education secretary said the government was looking at best practice in other countries where schools are already beginning to reopen. He said a sub-group from the scientific advisory group for emergencies (Sage) advising the government on its response to the pandemic had been set up to focus solely on issues surrounding school reopening.

"It is incredibly important that we get the right balance in terms of actually making sure that we create an environment that is good to learn in but also that is a safe environment for people to both work in and learn in as well," he told MPs.

The education secretary faced persistent questioning about the impact of school closures on the most disadvantaged pupils from committee chair, Conservative MP Robert Halfon, who warned of a "potential cascade of mounting social injustice that could last a decade".

Only small numbers of children classed as vulnerable by the government have taken up school places kept open for them during the course of the coronavirus crisis, and research has suggested many children from disadvantaged backgrounds are accessing little if any online learning.

Williamson said the government had put in £100m worth of investment in equipment and IT support for children disadvantaged by the digital divide. During the course of the hearing it emerged however that the promised 200,000 laptops would not start to arrive in schools until the end of next month, with the majority delivered in June.

The government's free school meal voucher scheme, set up to try to ensure that the poorest children do not go hungry during the crisis, also came in for sharp criticism from MPs who were concerned about long delays and "deeply frustrated" headteachers who were spending "hours and hours" trying to access the Edenred ordering system.

Williamson acknowledged schools had faced challenges because of the high level of demand. “We’ve been doing everything we can to support them in terms of being able to get these vouchers out as rapidly as possible.”

The education secretary reiterated plans for an autumn series of what he described as “shortened” exams for pupils unhappy with their grades, which will this year be calculated largely on teacher assessment as exams have been cancelled. There have been reports that some headteachers are opposed, arguing that it would be “totally impractical”.

