Dear all

Your children have been away from school for just over 2 days; I suspect that it may feel like longer!

 You have had a lot of communication from us recently and that must have been hard to manage when you are juggling so many demands. It is my intention (after this letter!) to reduce the number of occasions on which we send messages. However, I would like to take the opportunity to offer some guidance and some reassurance with regard to home learning:

Firstly, these are unprecedented times. It will be incredibly difficult for you to meet all of the demands put upon you right now. We know that when we welcome your children back, we will have to take account of them having missed a significant chunk of school. This is not a problem; the teachers here are experts in identifying learning needs and meeting them. We will find a way to catch up as our whole nation is in this together. The priority has to be the health and wellbeing of all your family; It is not worth falling out over a task on a website. I hope that you will see this as an opportunity to spend some quality time with your children doing what makes you all happy. However, If you are able to dedicate a little time each day to support your child’s learning, we will be thrilled.

 Everything that you need is on our website. Just ‘google’ Highworth Combined School and you will find it very easily (along with a lovely photo of Mr Kilner!)

        All that you need during this time is under the tab ‘Coronavirus Closure’. You do not need to log on or to wait for our daily Eschools message. Everything prepared for this period is available here

        The first document that you will see is ‘Closure Guide to Parents’. This explains our strategy for supporting home learning

        At the core of the strategy are the Home Learning Matrices set by teachers in year groups. There are 6 suggested activities, published 3 times a week. Our suggestion is that your child has a go at up to 3 of these ideas each day. Please prioritise this learning

        We are supplementing the matrices with suggestions for all ages in our daily ‘Home Learning Ideas’ updates. These are entirely optional, but might help you keep young minds busy

        There are further suggestions related to the PE and Music curriculum which will be updated weekly. Again, these are suggestions only

        We know that some homes have limited access to online resources. From now on, at least 4 of the activities on the Home Learning Matrices will not require further internet access or use of a printer

        If in doubt, encourage your child to READ. This will have more impact on learning than anything else that they do

 Inevitably, you will have questions and comments. Please send these by email, to either office@highworthcombined.co.uk, or to the email address for your child’s year group (shown on the Closure Guide). We have a tiny number of staff on site (but a lot of staff working at home) and cannot answer the phones

 Finally, I’d like to share a blog that I read yesterday that made me chuckle. I hope you enjoy it too!

As ever, my very best wishes.

Clare Pankhania

 *Dear Supply Teacher – AKA Parents/Carers*

*I bet you have had a challenging day. I was a supply teacher for 3 weeks and it was really difficult. If you are feeling a bit out of your depth it is no surprise. However, you have a bit of an advantage over most supply teachers in that at least you know the names of the students in the class and you have a clue of what the rules are!*

*How was it teaching Spanish or physics today? If you didn’t feel a bit inadequate I’d be amazed. I remember trying to teach a French lesson as a supply teacher when my French was pretty much limited to Monsieur and Madame Marsaud who always seemed to be dans le jardin!*

*Schools have been really busy trying to set work that can be done independently of the need for you to have good subject knowledge so, if your young person got stuck today and asked you for help that you couldn’t give, please don’t feel bad. What has been asked of you is enormous and what we’ve tried to do when setting the work is definitely not going to be perfect.*

*So what do you do if they get stuck? If you have the confidence to go online or look it up in books the learning adventure you can have with your child will be great fun! If you don’t have the confidence please don’t feel bad. It’s important that the learning doesn’t become a cause of argument. You have a great deal of time to spend together and that won’t help!*

*Remember the amazing resource that you probably have in your front room. I have learned loads from Deadly 60 for instance and loved chatting about it with my son. Talking about any of the facts that are mentioned is learning. There are hours of fantastic learning conversations that can happen from one episode of Horrible Histories!*

*The bottom line is that you need to keep them thinking about new stuff. You are not expected to have all the answers as I can assure you the teachers don’t either!*