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| **Highworth Combined School** |
| |  | | --- | | Dear all  It has been an emotional week as we say good bye until September for most of the pupils who have been coming into school and good bye and good luck for the future to our pupils in year 6. It is not the ending that any of us would wish, but the year 6 staff team have done an amazing job of finding ways to mark the occasion and there a few surprise planned for next week. We will send updates to let you know about these, so please keep reading our messages and going on to the website.  Once again, I would like to remind you that there will be a Virtual Transition Day on Wednesday 15th July. On Wednesday morning you will receive a message to tell you the name of your child’s new teacher. You will also receive a message explaining how to access the activities for the day. Please make time for this at some point on Wednesday, or before the end of term, as it will be a big support to your children.  A reminder that all staff will be in school next week preparing for the new year. There are lots of PE kits in school, and whilst they may no longer be the right size for your child, we would be very happy to facilitate you collecting them during school hours any day next week. It would help if you could phone beforehand so that we can have the kit ready for you when you arrive. Any other belongings (pencil cases, etc.) will be reunited with their owners during the 2 days back in their existing classrooms.  The risk assessment and planning for the full time return to school of all pupils in September have been completed. I need to communicate a lot of important information about this and I plan to do so in small chunks between now and the end of term on 17th July. I will also send this information just before the beginning of the new term.  For now, I would like to tell you that all pupils will return to school on Tuesday 1st September (Monday 31st August is a Bank Holiday). On the 1st, and on Wednesday 2nd September, your children will spend their time in their existing classes (where they were at the start of lock down on 20th March). On Thursday 4th and Friday 5th September, the children will be in their new classes getting started on new relationships and learning. This may not apply to all children in Nursery and Reception so you must see the individual letters that will be sent to you about starting arrangements.  I know that many of you will have some concerns about the safe return to school of your children. The Government guidance used to ensure that Highworth will operate in the safest possible manner can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>  The guidance explains that although the risk of contracting coronavirus cannot be eliminated, it can be reduced using the following measures:   ·         a requirement that people who are ill stay at home  ·         robust hand and respiratory hygiene  ·         enhanced cleaning arrangements  ·         active engagement with NHS Test and Trace  ·         formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable, using the following strategies   * + grouping children together into ‘bubbles’   + avoiding contact between groups   + arranging classrooms with forward facing desks   + staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible.   All of these measure have been incorporated in to our risk assessment and plans. In order to achieve the reduction in contacts in our school, we have decided to form ‘year group bubbles’. In essence, this means that the children and adults within a year group become an independent and self-sufficient bubble that does not mix with any other bubble. There are a few exceptions to allow for specialist provision, but social distancing is used to reduce risk in these instances. This means that each child’s possible ‘close’ contact with carriers of the virus, is reduced from around 500 individuals, during normal operation, to around 65.  In order to help you understand the measures that are in place for September opening, I will be hosting a question and answer session using Zoom on Tuesday 14th July at 6.30pm. I hope that as many of you as possible will join David Thomas, Chair of Governors, so that we can alleviate concerns you may have. To make the meeting as productive as possible, given that there may be many participants, I will ask you to mute your microphones and submit your questions using the ‘chat’ function. The meeting will be for no more than hour and I will try to answer all questions within that time.  Please use this link to join:  Clare Pankhania is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.  Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85062423871?pwd=QVdDTGZKSUxLT2g1enU2S3N3Yms0UT09>  Meeting ID: 850 6242 3871 Password: 8ikC10  My very best wishes for a happy (dry) weekend  Clare Pankhania    Please see the message recently received from the safeguarding team at Thames Valley Police about how parents can monitor the safe use of their children’s mobile phones. If your child has a smart phone, please read the message. | |

***Mobile phone monitoring apps***

*We have come across some parent mobile phone monitoring apps which we think are*

*appropriate to share with you, if you are not already aware. We have had a number of incidents recently where teenagers, particularly those who have just started secondary school, have been in contact with strangers over social media and/or been sending & receiving inappropriate photos to other individuals, without the knowledge of their parents, until it is too late and the damage has been done. There is obviously concern for their safety and with so many children now having a phone from a young age, often to ensure their own physical safety when travelling to and from school, there can be as many problems created by having a mobile as there are problems solved.*

*I appreciate that these problems often arise quicker than the technology can keep up with finding solutions for them, but thankfully there are a number of apps available to assist parents in monitoring what their children are looking at and accessing online, whilst still allowing them to have a mobile phone with them for safety reasons. Ideally, the sooner these apps are adopted and used by parents, the more likely children would be willing to accept that having their online activity monitored, to an extent, is just the norm and what is expected in order to keep them safe.*

*The apps available are:*

*Monqi –* [*https://www.monqi.co/*](https://www.monqi.co/)

*Norton Family –*[*https://uk.norton.com/norton-family-premier*](https://uk.norton.com/norton-family-premier)*currently have 6 months free subscription*

*Kaspersky Safe Kids –* [*https://www.kaspersky.co.uk/safe-kids*](https://www.kaspersky.co.uk/safe-kids)

Qustodio – <https://www.qustodio.com/en/>