

Dear all

Looking back over the last week, if I had to choose one word to describe all that's happened it would be overwhelming. In response, we have decided that at this time our mantra will become... Less is More.

Thank you for doing such an amazing job of supporting your children with Remote Learning. We know that for some the demands, alongside all your other responsibilities, have been overwhelming. We hope that our email and phone support has helped a little. Please remember that through all of this, the relationships within your family have to be the priority. Do not let struggles over completion of Remote Learning damage them. I know we can close gaps in learning very effectively; we did it in the Autumn Term and we will do it again when we are lucky enough to have everyone back in school. It will be much more difficult for any of us to repair damaged relationships and wellbeing, both yours and your children's. If this means that some days, you do not complete all of the Remote Learning so be it... Less is More.

I know that the repeated ping-pong of alerts from Eschools to advise you of another message from Highworth can be overwhelming. We are trying really hard to limit the number of letters and messages you get from us. Where ever possible there will be one message at 9am with details of the days Remote Learning and then all other essential information will be within this newsletter, sent once a week... Less is More.

As usual the Highworth team have risen to the challenge of radical change to the ways they work with minimal notice, but many, myself included, have felt overwhelmed at times. Many of our staff, like you, are juggling work commitments with providing home school for their own young children. We feel the pressure of media attention upon a way of working new to us all. We also feel let down by the Department For Education who send conflicting, highly demanding and last minute guidance. Logically, we all know that we are doing our best, but emotionally, it often feels like this is not enough. I imagine that this is common amongst the whole community right now! We are going to keep things simple by continuing to send 3 links a day, allowing us to focus the majority of our time and attention upon providing feedback and support by email and phone where we believe we can have most impact... Less is More.

When reflecting on doing our best, we identified some additional support we hope will be helpful, but not overwhelming (Less is More we hope!):

- Each Monday, your children will be able to watch a video of their teachers briefly introducing the learning for the coming week. These will be on our website; links to the relevant page will be included in Mondays Remote Learning messages from year groups
- Once a fortnight your child will be able to have a video call catch up with their teacher on the School Cloud platform you may remember from Parents Evening last term. Instructions for how to make an appointment are attached and copied below. Please book appointments for the classes listed here from Friday 15th January:
 - Nursery: Wednesday 20th; 2pm to 3.30pm
 - RCA: Wednesday 20th; 10am to 11.30am
 - RC: Thursday 21st; 1pm to 2.30pm
 - 3MP: Thursday 21st; 10am to 11.30am
 - 3FM: Wednesday 20th; 1.30pm to 3pm
 - 4NS: Friday 22nd; 1pm to 2.30pm
 - 4TS: Friday 22nd; 10am to 11.30am

- Meetings for all other classes will take place during week commencing January 25th, with details in next week's newsletter
- In order to help you in your new role as teachers, we are holding on line workshops by Zoom. The topic next week will be on how to support Phonics and Early Reading, aimed at parents of children in Reception and Year 1. Workshops are on Wednesday morning and Thursday early evening. Further details are in the attached letter and copied below. In the weeks to come there will be workshops on Maths and our new curriculum for PSHE
- Next Friday, you will be able to view a recording of an Assembly. Teachers will nominate children to be Warriors of The Week and I will announce the recipients of the certificates. Links to the relevant page of the website will be provided within the Remote Learning messages sent to you next Friday.

Financial pressures for many are huge right now so please see some information below about qualification for Free School Meals. This is also available on our website.

Finally, I have attached a documents from Bucks Mind regarding parent wellbeing which seems appropriate to send at this time!

Looking at the length of this message, I may have caused further feelings of being overwhelmed. Oh dear! I'll keep working on... Less is More!

My very best wishes for the weekend

Clare Pankhania

Parents' Guide for Booking Appointments



Browse to <https://highworth.schoolcloud.co.uk/>



Step 1: Login

Fill out the details on the page then click the *Log In* button.

A confirmation of your appointments will be sent to the email address you provide.

Step 2: Select Parents' Evening

Click on the date you wish to book.

Unable to make all of the dates listed? Click *I'm unable to attend*.

Step 3: Select Booking Mode

Choose *Automatic* if you'd like the system to suggest the shortest possible appointment schedule based on the times you're available to attend. To pick the times to book with each teacher, choose *Manual*. Then press *Next*.

We recommend choosing the automatic booking mode when browsing on a mobile device.

Step 4: Choose Teachers

If you chose the automatic booking mode, drag the sliders at the top of the screen to indicate the earliest and latest you can attend.

Select the teachers you'd like to book appointments with. A green tick indicates they're selected. To de-select, click on their name.

Step 5a (Automatic): Book Appointments

If you chose the automatic booking mode, you'll see provisional appointments which are held for 2 minutes. To keep them, choose *Accept* at the bottom left.

If it wasn't possible to book every selected teacher during the times you are able to attend, you can either adjust the teachers you wish to meet with and try again, or switch to manual booking mode (Step 5b).

Step 5b (Manual): Book Appointments

Click any of the green cells to make an appointment. Blue cells signify where you already have an appointment. Grey cells are unavailable.

To change an appointment, delete the original by hovering over the blue box and clicking *Delete*. Then choose an alternate time.

Once you're finished booking all appointments, at the top of the page in the alert box, press *click here* to finish the booking process.

Step 6: Finished

All your bookings now appear on the *My Bookings* page. An email confirmation has been sent and you can also print appointments by pressing *Print*. Click *Subscribe to Calendar* to add these and any future bookings to your calendar.

To change your appointments, click on *Amend Bookings*.

Phonics and Reading Information Zoom Meeting

Reception and Year 1 parents

Dear Parents and Carers,

We would like to invite you to a phonics and reading zoom meeting/workshop next week. There will be two sessions next week, and we hope you will be able to attend *one*:

Wednesday 20th January 2021 at 11am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88315144843?pwd=YWVQR2FtYjhmandrVkMwTVA2bThjdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 1514 4843

Passcode: 8BaYYd

This meeting will count as one of the three lessons for Wednesday for all children in Year R and Year 1. We understand that to attend this workshop, you will have your children with you – this is fine! We would love to have you and your child/children join this workshop event.

or

Thursday 21st January 2021 at 6pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88315144843?pwd=YWVQR2FtYjhmandrVkMwTVA2bThjdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 1514 4843

Passcode: 8BaYYd

During the meeting, we will talk to you about the Read Write Inc. phonics programme that we use in school and this will also bring clarity to the online home learning you are doing to support your children.

By supporting your child's phonics learning and reading at home you will be preparing them to be excellent lifelong readers.

We very much look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

Tracy Chamberlain

Lead teacher for phonics and reading

Liz Ward

Early Years Leader

When joining the zoom call, please:

- ✓ **Try to be prompt**
- ✓ **Mute your end**
- ✓ **Have a pencil and paper ready**
- ✓ **Type any questions you have into the chat box – questions will be answered at the end of the workshop**

Arrangements for families who currently qualify to receive Benefits Related Free School Meals

- Vouchers are sent electronically
- Vouchers are for the value of 1 week's meals for each child; £15
- Vouchers are sent at the beginning of each qualifying week

If you think that you now qualify for Benefits Related Free School Meals:

You may have heard of the Government scheme to support families by providing vouchers for those children who receive Free School Meals. Understandably, this is causing confusion. All children from Reception up to Year 2 receive what are called Universal Infant Free School Meals, regardless of the financial circumstances of their family. However, vouchers are only being issued to those families who qualify for Benefits Related Free School Meals. Buckinghamshire Council provide the school with a list of children who qualify for this benefit and their families have been sent vouchers accordingly.

I am very aware that many families who did not previously qualify for this benefit, sadly, now do. We would like to start providing vouchers to more families as quickly as possible. If you think that you now qualify for Benefits Related Free School Meals because of a change in your financial circumstances, please urgently email office@highworthcombined.co.uk with the following information:

- ❑ Names of children who are pupils at our school
- ❑ Full name of the main wage earner
- ❑ Date of birth of main wage earner
- ❑ National Insurance number of the main wage earner

We will use this information to check for eligibility. If you are eligible, your details will appear on our database of qualifying families and you will start to receive vouchers. Please be aware that there is time lag between you applying for additional benefits and us being notified that you are eligible.

I know that you are juggling a lot of demands right now, but the sooner we get this information the sooner we can start the process.