

1st May 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

We hope that all our Starbeck families and friends are well and we do miss you all! Thank you to parents and carers for your support in trying to ensure that children continue to engage in learning during this time of closure. We do appreciate that the nature of more 'on-line' based learning can be challenging at times, especially in situations where there are competing siblings and family looking for tablet or computer time. We do know from conversations and feedback on-line that many children are engaging well and completing some lovely pieces of learning.

Purple Mash & On-line updates

Children in Rec through to Yr 5 are now all able to access Mini Mash or Purple Mash. Thank you for your input in getting children going with this. If you do not have access to the internet or have a suitable device then, as previously mentioned, we can supply you with further paper-based learning activities. Please contact school if you would like to arrange this.

Due to the number of schools and children accessing PM, there will on occasions be errors or issues that emerge. One error we have noticed is that the 'Alert' icon is not always correctly showing when there are new notifications for a child that have been set by the teacher. Please could you therefore ask children to click on this when they log-in regardless of whether there is a number indicated on the icon or not.

Thank you for your continued support in helping children to get onto PM or Google Classroom in Yr 6 and to maintain a regular balance of learning with other activities. Please remember that for other suggestions, you can visit the class pages on our website.

National Developments

School leaders are continuing to be consulted for our views around how we envisage a safe return to school once this is announced. Yesterday, the Prime Minister indicated that next week he will be "*setting out a comprehensive plan next week to explain how we can get our economy moving, how we can get our children back to school, back into childcare and third how we can travel to work and make life in the work place safer.*" Any dates or further details mentioned in the press are predictions or rumours and we must therefore wait for clear guidance. Our trust executives have consulted with all headteachers within our trust in providing views to national bodies and indeed the government. Like everyone, we look forward to being able to re-open school and get back to school-based learning, however we respect the need for this to be safe and at the appropriate time as instructed by the government and the DfE. I will write to you again once we are clear of the timeline and guidance for the coming weeks.

As the weeks have progressed, I am aware that the need to support each other becomes more and more critical. Please do reach out to us if you are in need of help in any way, whether that be supporting learning at home, or other domestic concerns. Some families have indeed done this and Mrs Pitts and myself are happy to get back to anyone who would like help. If you do wish to contact us, you can email admin@starbeck.n-yorks.sch.uk or call school and leave a message for us.

We are very grateful to Morrisons, our local supermarket, who have been fantastic in contacting us to see if they can help us in any way during the national lock-down period. A special thank you to Mrs Gillhespy, the



Morrisons Community Representative, who has been in regular contact with school – we are very grateful and I have written to the manager of the Starbeck branch to extend our appreciation.

Free School Meals

Some parents have asked about how to receive the free school meal vouchers that you will have seen mentioned on the news. These have been sent out nationally to parents who are registered as eligible for free school meals. This is different to the Universal Free School Meals that all Rec, Yr 1 and Yr 2 children receive. Free School Meals is eligibility-based and must be applied for. If successful, the school receives some additional funding to support your child at school and once they reach Yr 3, should you remain eligible, free school meals would continue into KS2. We do inform parents about this from time to time via letters however we appreciate that some employment situations may have changed over the last few weeks. If you would like to check whether you are eligible for FSM, then visit the following website or search for North Yorkshire Free School Meals.

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/free-school-meals>

If you are eligible and apply, please notify school if your application is successful so that we can update our records and arrange for FSM vouchers to be sent out while schools continue to be closed.

I will be in touch again very soon once we are clearer of the government's plans to get the country moving again. All our staff have been touched by lovely comments and gestures over the last few weeks from parents and friends who have been in touch. Thank you for your generosity and kindness which is much appreciated. We are extremely grateful for all your help in trying to keep children learning. You are all doing a fantastic job!

Please do remain safe and we wish you continued good health.

Yours sincerely,

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