

The Hermitage School
Oakwood Road St. Johns Woking
Surrey GU21 8JU
T 01483 472047 F 01483 472313
E info@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk
HEADTEACHER Mrs J Harrup

www.hermitage.surrey.sch.uk



Dear Parents

21st May 2020

It's so hard to believe that today draws to a close the first part of the Summer Term – and what a strange and challenging time it has been! Since the Government 'closed' schools from 20th March, the school has been open – continually – throughout the Easter Holidays and Bank Holidays, and now throughout the forthcoming Half Term. Most members of the The Hermitage team have been in school during that time supporting children of Key Workers and more vulnerable children of our school community.

I am so very proud of the team that we have at The Hermitage, who have worked tirelessly to support children and their families – either at school, or at home accessing home learning. They have done this whilst also juggling their own families, worries and anxieties. This period of lockdown has been difficult for all of us, but the commitment The Hermitage team has shown has been outstanding – I am so very grateful to each and every one of them.

We are now also trying to plan for the possible return of our Year 6 children after half term, and wait with interest to hear whether the Government feel that it is safe to do so. After half term, we may have six Year 6 groups, three Key Worker and vulnerable children groups, as well as a group of our Orchard children. Most of our classrooms will be 'in use'. Government guidance states that there can be no more than 15 children in each of these groups, and the same adults have to be with the same group continually. There can be no interaction of children and adults between different groups. Therefore, after half term, the vast majority of the Hermitage staff will be working with a small group of children throughout the week. Understandably, those teachers and teaching assistants working all week at school, will not be in a position to regularly comment on children's work on the class blogs. There will be a *small*, home-based team of staff who will be keeping in touch with children through the blogs by commenting on their work. For home learners, work will be set for the week on a Monday morning through the blog, but as most teachers will be teaching at school all week, your child's work will be responded to by other members of staff. Your child's class teacher will, I am sure, do their very best to monitor your child's work, but I am sure you will understand that there are only so many hours in a day, and I have to consider their workload and wellbeing.

Across the school, we are preparing to care for our small groups of children. This means that we are having to remove most furniture from classrooms to give enough room for desks to be spaced out safely. We are having to consider how surfaces in classrooms and around the school can be regularly cleaned throughout the day. So, on top of working with their groups, planning for them, as well as planning work for children working from home, I am having to ask members of staff to clean tables, chairs, bannisters, toilets, etc throughout the working day. The staff at the Hermitage have been so willing to help our children in any way they can, even though I cannot guarantee that they, or the children returning to school, will be safe from contracting the virus. However, I have written an extensive risk assessment to ensure measures and procedures are in place to help lower the risk. This leads to enormous pressures on school staff, who, like you, have their own worries, anxieties and home lives to organise and think about during these challenging times.

I don't know what the coming weeks will bring. The Government's 'ambition' is for all primary children to come back for a month before the Summer Term ends. How that will be organised and managed is unknown. We will continue to support you and your child/ren as much as we can, but as I have outlined above, there is only so much we can do until this awful pandemic is under control. We are trying our very best.

Wishing you a peaceful and healthy half term.

Mrs Harrup
Head teacher

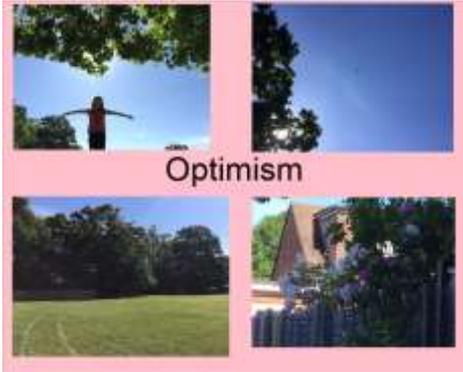
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The Hermitage School Newsletter

Positivity

Our Value of the Half Term has been 'Positivity'. The children coming into school have been taking photos of things which link to the value. Please see their inspiring work below:



Rob Biddulph World Record Attempt

Rob Biddulph has been running brilliant *Draw with Rob* draw along videos, which have amassed a huge online following and now been watched over 2 million times on YouTube).

On May 21st, Rob attempted to break the **Guinness World Record for the World's Biggest Art Lesson**.

The attempt was to help **raise money for those most impacted by COVID-19**. Participants donated what they could and companies have also pledged financial support. These donations will go towards high impact charities to counter the impact of COVID-19, including stopping the disease's spread, providing immediate relief to those most impacted and preventing future pandemics.

Noah in Monkey Puzzle joined the lesson and here is his fabulous picture:



Think U Know have created resources to support parents during COVID-19 and the closure of schools. Each fortnight, they release new home activity packs with simple 15 minute activities you can do with your child to support their online safety at a time when they will be spending more time online at home.

Please take a look:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/support-tools/home-activity-worksheets?utm_source=Thinkuknow&utm_campaign=46e6250b3e-TUK ONLINE SAFETY AT HOME 07 04 20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-46e6250b3e-55069125

Sophie on YouTube

Last week I took part in a charity song for my talent agency Goldmans Management. I'm in it towards the end with the purple background. My ballet teacher is also singing in it (she's the funny one) and her husband is playing the drums in a wig. It was really good fun to do even though I didn't even leave the house. It's to raise money to support entertainers who can't work because of lockdown. It has so far had 5.1K views. Take a look at the video on Sophie's blog post:

<https://hermitageandoaktreeblogs.net/ash2019/2020/05/11/sophie-on-youtube/>

