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HEADTEACHER Mrs J Harrup

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8th January 2021

## Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you have all been able to enjoy your Christmas break – how different it may have been this year.

It is with a very heavy heart that I have to share the extremely sad news that Mrs Beamish passed away during the Christmas holidays, after a period of illness. Mrs Beamish was an integral part of The Orchard Centre, and had been for many years. She joined The Hermitage School in 1998, nearly 23 years ago. During that time, Mrs Beamish supported the students in The Orchard, and children in the rest of the school, with kindness, understanding, patience, knowledge and humour; all the qualities that we will remember her for. Our thoughts and sincere condolences go out to Mrs Beamish's family and friends.

On Wednesday, following Boris Johnson's announcement on Monday evening that Primary Schools were to move across to Home Learning for most learners, we welcomed approximately 90 key worker / vulnerable children into school. As the week has progressed, these numbers have increased and we are very close to capacity and full in some year groups. I have organised the children into small groups to enable them and the adults to be able to socially distance as much as possible in the classroom.

Our home learning provision was also put in place on Wednesday, despite most of the teachers and teaching assistants being in school teaching key worker children. Thank you to the parents who have passed on positive comments to teachers about the home learning structure – it really is appreciated. Unfortunately, we have had to put a temporary hold on our video calls home but we really hope we can get this back up and running early next week. Bear with us, we know how important it is to remain connected with the children at home as much as we can, we want to see them every day and for them to see their teachers and friends. We fully appreciate how difficult it is for parents at home, trying to support their children to learn but also, in many cases, trying to work as well. We will do our utmost to support you with this as much as we can.

School is open – most members of staff are on the school premises throughout the day – so if you need help, support or a question answered, please ring in or email the year group emails, or the office, and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Often, a phone conversation with their teacher works wonders for a child's motivation. Please keep in touch with us and know that we will do everything we can to help the children continue with their learning.

### Story time with Mrs Harrup

I will be reading a chapter a day of Northern Lights by Philip Pullman (the first in His Dark Materials trilogy) live on the Hermitage School's Facebook page at 12.00pm each day. Please encourage your child to join me if they'd like to. Fingers crossed I can get the technology to work and I hope the session will be available to watch afterwards (not live) as well.

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**Internet Devices**

Please contact the school if you need to borrow a school laptop for the duration of the lockdown period to help your child with their home learning. I still have a few laptops here that I can loan out to families; please contact the school office if you would like to borrow one.

Thank you for your continued support during these most challenging times. Wishing you a calm and peaceful weekend.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J Harrup".

Mrs J Harrup  
Headteacher