



WHYTRIG MIDDLE SCHOOL

One of the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools

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Executive Headteacher: John Barnes

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Dear Parent or Carer

As I write to you this afternoon, I am reflecting on the fact that it should have been our sports day this time last week, although I am sure that it would not have come as a surprise when you consider what the weather situation was like then. Fortunately, it has felt much more like June over this last week. At just over the half way point of the last half term we would have already shared the outcomes of the Key Stage 2 school games athletics at the start of the month, a group of year 5 and 6 pupils would have had an advanced cycling trip to Rothbury, the Showing Potential Academy would by now have completed their four input sessions with us and this week we would have enjoyed the annual Key Stage 3 team events and the Northumberland School Games Finals, as well as more residential, reward and end of year trips in the final weeks to look forward to. Sadly, because of the current situation this has not happened this year. We are disappointed for the children who will miss out as we all appreciate the positive impact such activities can have on our young people and we are disappointed for you too. Of course we are also disappointed for the staff, who particularly in the case of organising events and trips, spend a lot of extra time planning and completing paperwork to make sure they can happen. In the case of the cancelled France residential, the planning for that trip started at this time last year. Hopefully, we can look forward to a return to normality in the coming months, and to seeing a fully populated calendar of events in the next school year.

In school we are now coming to the end of the fourth week of Year 6 being back in school and the children and staff have coped tremendously well under the 2m social distancing constraints that are in place on the site; it is not how we really want our school to be however we understand it has to be like this for everyone's safety. We are also still running provision for vulnerable and key worker children in our school, which includes children from Astley High School. It is fair to say the staff have done a fantastic job, trying to balance being in school, setting online work and in many cases, also managing home school tutoring of their own children. The COVID crisis has certainly highlighted to many people across the nation, the wonderful job school staff do to try to ensure the best outcomes for children.

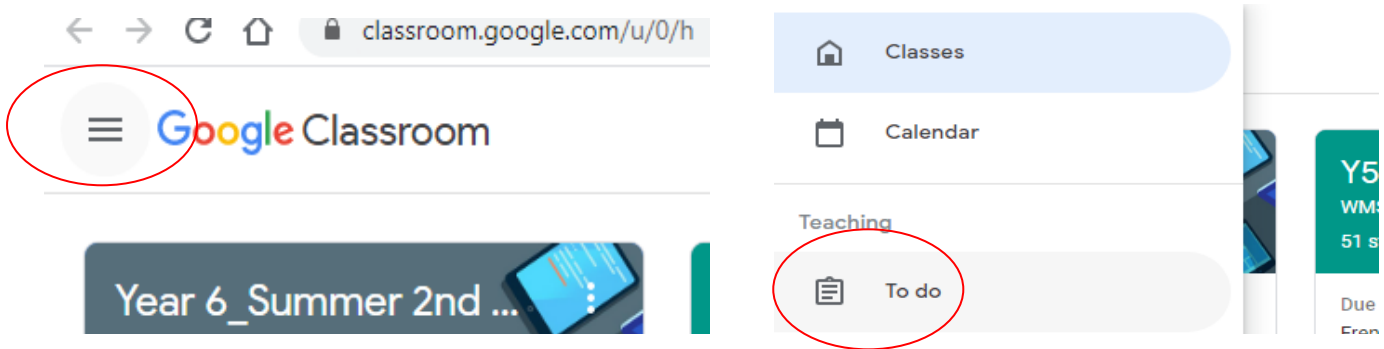
This week we have also enjoyed seeing some of our Year 5 pupils in school for contact visits. Unfortunately, we have been limited to what we can offer because of the current site capacity limitations and the availability of staff due to their roles in the current provision; we are having to be very strict in how we go about admitting anyone on site and have to ensure that everyone follows the guidance and measures that are in place. However, we thoroughly enjoyed seeing the children and the sessions provided valuable keeping in touch time, staff were able to discuss academic work and of course share the new form classes for September, when the new academic year starts. The changes are:

5C (Mrs Chadwick's class) will be moving into 6E (Mr Edwards' class)
5M (Mrs McClellan's class) will be moving into 6L (Mrs Linney's class)

The Year 5 visits are the start of a four week rolling programme of visits into school. Next week we will welcome our new intake Year 4 pupils for contact visits, where they will be able to meet their new form teacher for September. We take a lot of pride in the extensive transition arrangements that normally take place and feel so sorry that our new intake will not have the opportunity to experience the usual offer, but working closely with our feeder schools, we will again do our utmost to ensure transition is as smooth as it can be for them under the circumstances. In the penultimate week we will welcome Year 7 pupils into school for contact visits. We are in the process of sending out appointment times for those who have requested to come in. Of course there is no

form class movement for those children, as our Key Stage 3 children keep the same form teachers for both of Years 7 and 8. Finally, we will be sending out letters today to parents and carers of Year 8 pupils to gauge numbers for contact visits into school at the end of the term. Of course we are naturally disappointed that our Year 8 children will miss out on the annual end of year assembly and the award ceremony that goes with it, but we will ensure that they do not miss out entirely and will reschedule that event for the Autumn Term when things are back to normal. We would therefore kindly ask them at this moment in time, not to throw away their school ties!

As you will be aware, we have been using Google Classroom more and more to set work for pupils in school over the last half term. The lockdown has certainly highlighted the potential for using such platforms to set work and it is our intention to continue to use Google Classroom in a reduced but consistent form next year, so now is the time to become familiar with it. One of the top tips which can help your child to organise their work is to look at the classroom in the 'work to do' view. In doing this they can see all their outstanding tasks listed which will help them to organise and prioritise their workload. To do this it is quite simple. Click on the 3-line bar on the top left hand side next to 'Google Classroom' and click on 'To do' from the drop down (see images below).



If you have any queries at all about any of the work being set over this half term, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Finally, we have been happy to welcome Mrs Lowden back into school last week following her maternity leave. She will have form responsibility for a Year 7 class next year. I am also very happy to confirm Miss Baker's permanent appointment to our school team and she will have form responsibility with our new intake in Year 5 next year. Our pastoral team next year will be:

Year 5

5B – Miss Baker 5C – Mrs Chadwick 5M – Mrs McClellan (Year Group Leader)

Year 6

6E – Mr Edwards (Year Group Leader) 6L – Mrs Linney

Year 7

7L – Mrs Lowden 7Ro – Mr Robinson 7Ru – Miss Rutter (Key Stage 3 Leader)

Year 8

8C – Mrs Campbell 8L – Mrs Lawton

We will be informing our Year 6 pupils of their new form teacher very shortly and a full staffing list will be sent out in preparation for the new term.

As always we hope everyone is staying safe and healthy and looking after each other and themselves and we look forward to the day when we can have our school community back in some sort of normality. In the meantime, please take care!

Yours sincerely

Mr J K Souter
Head of School