



Dear Parents and Carers

SHIRE OAK
C of E (VC) Primary School

Thank you so much for the kind **messages of thanks and support** we have been receiving recently – they really do help. Thank you also to families who have been contacting Ofsted and/or filling in the Ofsted ParentView survey <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/> to let them know your views. As always, I hope and trust that we would be the first people you contact if you had a concern about school.

It has been quite a whirlwind fortnight and guidance to schools continues to be published, which we are trying to keep up to date with. We are pleased that in the first national lockdown we were able to develop our use of **Google Classroom**, **Tapestry**, etc. to make sure that we could help children to have a positive home learning experience. Nationally the expectations for all schools to do this have been strengthened and this has resulted in so much demand to services like Tapestry and Teachers2Parents that systems have crashed and not coped with the demand. This seems to be being ironed out, but do get in touch with us if there continue to be problems.

At Shire Oak we are conscious that **each family is in a different situation**. Some families prefer work they can get alongside their children with. Some want the work to be totally independent. Some would like a full school day, others prefer to be able to follow their own learning interests for part of the day. The most important things to do are daily reading (and phonics in the younger years). After that, please prioritise the maths and English. As the children have already had so much time off school last year there is more new content being taught than revision and consolidation this time and the maths, particularly, builds day on day. If you feel you are 'getting behind' with White Rose maths, for example, it might be better to watch the input, set a time limit (45 minutes to an hour for older children) and do a couple of questions from each day, than spend all week ploughing through all of Monday's questions. This will make it easier to keep up with the class as a whole and access class learning when we return. Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers who are in school will be accessing the remote learning set by their teacher, so they still need to do school work on the days they are at home to help them have appropriate work on the days they are in school.

For those families who have the opposite problem and would like *more* home learning to occupy their days, there is plenty more to do! In Google Classroom there is a **virtual library** where the children can find comprehension activities, extra online books to read, reading related activities, quiz questions and a daily chapter being read to them from Winnie the Pooh – lovely! The code to join the library is **tznyo2k**.

For children (and staff) who are particularly proud of a piece of work or project that has been worked on, **my office** (Ms Devane's room) is still open for good work. It has moved online too, and by joining on Google Classroom with **7ptisb7** children can post things they would like me to see. Children in Reception and Year 1 can ask their parents to email me things they would really like to see, with the subject 'to show Ms Devane'.

Ms Virgin is busy putting **art challenges** in the children's Google Classrooms. Ask your child to look for them in the class folder. There is plenty to find out and do. For children in Reception and Year 1 there are additional ideas in the Activities section on **Tapestry**. (Tapestry seems to be holding up better now after some technical issues earlier in the week.) For reading books or other activities, please communicate with the class teacher. When things are left for collection, they are here in the foyer for you to find along with a tray to return books, etc.



The Worry Box

If you have a worry, let us know! Mr Nash and Ms Hinchliffe will reply as soon as they can.

Also on Google Classroom is the virtual '**Worry Box**.' If children would like to speak to Mr Nash or Miss Hinchliffe about a problem (big or small) then they can send in a request. If younger children would benefit from a school adult to talk to, parents can get in touch with us to let us know.

I must apologise to parents of Reception Class for not communicating in time about the virtual **maths meeting**. This letter has been mostly written since the end of last week, but

due to changing guidance I have delayed sending it which meant there wasn't timely communication that we will still hold the meeting soon, but will postpone it a little while we get up to speed with remote learning and being in school for the children who need to come in.

Other virtual events have gone ahead as planned recently and gone well. Thank you to the parents who volunteered to represent school in our **Zoom Open Morning** – it is so helpful to prospective parents to have a real view of what school is like (and we know that they speak to other parents in turn, so the reach is further than those that attend). In the school holidays **FOSOPS** arranged a family quiz online with a Christmassy theme which was very good fun. Thank you to Sapna, Jai and Rishe for their work putting it together.

To keep children connected socially, to see each other and be encouraged to do their school work we are arranging weekly **Snack and Chat** sessions in each class, using Google Meet. These are also a good way for us to see that children are well and happy and pick up on any worries. Please encourage your child to join – if they are shy they can join with the camera and microphone off.



For children in school it is recommended that, where possible, they wear **clean top layers of clothing** each day. (Or clothes that have been rotated every 3 days instead.) If children in school are not in perfect uniform because of this, that is – of course – fine.

Thank you for your cooperation and openness in helping us to allocate spaces in school for the **children of critical workers and children who are vulnerable**. Demand this time has been much, much higher from the outset and we are trying to limit numbers in school to assist the lockdown and also ensure there are enough staff able to facilitate learning at home for everyone else. It seems that some employers have been less flexible this time and are even putting unfair pressure on parents to claim critical worker status. (Sometimes a job appears on the list, but that does not mean it is necessarily covered as it is introduced by 'Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response...' meaning that it is the role being played in this lockdown, rather than the job title itself that counts.) In response to the high numbers of places claimed in some schools, the government have now added this line: *Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.* This is reinforced by the letter attached from Leeds City Council. I am always nervous sharing these messages, however, as our experience is that nurses working on COVID wards and other vital workers who go out to work or have to make very confidential calls from home end up being the ones to take leave or make tricky arrangements and we do not want that to happen! We understand that this is very **difficult for working families** – and especially single parent families who cannot share the load - and we do want you to share that with us so that we can help where we can. We hope, however, you understand why we have to triage our lists.

This lockdown there are some flexibilities that were not available in March last year. Single adult households can form a **support bubble** with another household, as can some families with disabilities and families with babies under one year old. All households with children can form a **childcare bubble** with another household. This has been working very effectively for some of our families – they can prioritise their working week between them and even find that the children need less attention and are more likely to engage willingly in their school work with other children there or another adult asking them to do it!

Well done everyone – it has been so good to see the levels of engagement online and we know that has taken a lot of effort all round. Have a good weekend.

Jane Astrid Devane

Jane Astrid Devane janead@shireoak.leeds.sch.uk





Art Camp 2021 15th -19th February

[Book Now](#)

Dear Art Campers

We had a really great Christmas Camp :) it was a huge success, I think we made something really special.

This February we are running two camps one at each site Shire Oak and Mill Field Primary School from the 15th-19th February.

We are now taking bookings for our Fabulous February Art Camp for Key workers / Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children.

We are opening the first Bubble now and once that is full will open the second Bubble. Please book early as we sell out often quite quickly and its really frustrating when we are full and can't accept any more bookings.

To book on follow the link and choose your preferred school

<https://artcampuk.magicbooking.co.uk/Identity/Account/Login>

We have been working on a new website I hope that you like it? <https://www.artcampuk.com/>

2020 was quite a stressful year for everyone hopefully things will start to go back to normal for 2021. In the meantime we strive to offer consistency and to create the best art camp days, to give you the break that you need. Thanks for supporting Art Camp we absolutely love what we do :)

With best wishes
Jon

There's a 10% discount to Parents of Shire Oak please contact jon@artcampuk.com for further info.



