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**Headteacher: Mike Riches**



5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Iron Acton Families,

As we approach the final week of term, I would like to thank you all again for everything you are doing to keep your children going with the current remote learning arrangements. We are very aware that, as time goes on, it can become more of a challenge. I also want to recognise the work of our fantastic staff team over recent weeks and thank them for all their hard work in living out our school vision 'courage to care'.

The main message to share with you for the final week is to just focus on doing what you can. Please speak to your child's class teacher if you need any support or advice.

You will have heard in the news that schools will not open until the 8<sup>th</sup> March at the earliest. We will keep you updated with any further information about school return when we know more. We are continually reviewing our approach to remote learning and would like to seek your views. Please click on the link to access our short anonymous survey to offer your constructive feedback <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZYHL3TQ>. It would be helpful if you could complete one per child if they are in different classes.

I would like to wish you all a restful half term break. Please note – school will return on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February**.

Mike Riches

### Online safety

The national online safety day will give us the opportunity to remind ourselves of the importance of staying safe online. Miss Abley, our resident computing expert, will be preparing resources to share to support teachers in this. Online safety is important all year round and we urge you to be aware of what your child is doing when online. **Please take this opportunity to remind your child of the importance of using kind words when speaking to others online – it can be very easy to forget this from time to time.**

Along with this newsletter you will find the PowerPoint shared during last term's online safety information session for parents. In addition, there are useful resources on the NSPCC website that we would urge all parents to read: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>. We would recommend looking at 'talking to your child about online safety', 'online games' and 'parental controls'.

You may be interested in attending a webinar for parents called "It is never going to happen to my child..." which is run by Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This will take place on 8 February 2021, 7pm – 8.30pm. For further information and to book, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/online-safety-for-parents-it-is-never-going-to-happen-to-my-child-tickets-133347623331>



### Curriculum approach

In September, we introduced a new approach to teaching our curriculum. You may have watched our video from the teachers explaining how this works (here it is again if you missed it: <https://youtu.be/elOuu5XoyY>). We would now like to share this information with you once again and answer questions you may have. When the time is right, we plan to offer opportunities for your child's class to share what they have been learning through the new approach.

*Why has the school changed its approach?*

We are always looking for ways to improve using new and innovative approaches. We often try to make relevant links between different areas of the curriculum and the concepts covered and we felt that it was time to look at a different way of doing this.

*What is the new approach called and why was it chosen?*

The new approach is called Curious City and it comes from a local organisation called Lighting Up Learning. This approach was chosen after a lot of research took place including visits to other schools using this approach as well as some using other approaches.

Curious City was chosen for the following reasons:

- It is well organised and is based on understanding of how children learn and develop
- It gives schools the flexibility to adapt and change it to suit their circumstances and celebrate the local area
- We liked the way it was based on states of being which is why we talk about being an artist rather than doing art, for example
- We felt the children and staff would be motivated by the enquiry based questions which are too big to answer in one go so need to be broken down into smaller parts
- A good amount of support was offered in setting it up and ensuring it was a sustainable project

*How is Curious City taught?*

Each week children spend around 3 hours engaging in Curious City lessons which are often referred to as 'Enquiry lessons'. It encompasses several areas of the National Curriculum: Art (artist), Design and Technology (Engineer), Geography (geographer), History (historian), Music (musician) and Science (scientist). Computing and Languages will be added at a later date.

Teachers begin by thinking ahead to the end of the enquiry and about a challenge they would like the children to take part in. They then unpick the knowledge and skills needed to achieve this and work backwards posing a series of smaller questions which they unpick each week.

*How does school know if it is working well?*

Teachers have the opportunity to plan alongside their link teacher at Hawkesbury and with an experienced practitioner at Lighting Up Learning. This ensures that all teachers are confident in the new approach and how it is taught.

Children and teachers speak positively about their latest enquiry. We regularly monitor this in school by asking children questions about their learning. They are able to explain this to us in great detail and we feel this has improved since implementing Curious City.

We will continue to share relevant information through the year and beyond. Please do speak to your child's class teacher for further information about their current enquiry.



### A fresh approach to writing

We will be adopting a slightly different approach to writing after half term, as we recognise that this element of the school curriculum has been particularly tricky for a number of pupils learning at home.

Working with experts at the local authority, we will be setting weekly writing plans that will focus largely on the grammar aspects of literacy, so that all pupils are aware of the key skills that are needed in order to write at their stage of development. The work will be based around a short story and pupils will be asked to do just one piece of short writing every week. The plan is to continue setting weekly plans in the summer term as well so that teachers will have a broad and balanced range of quality writing with which to assess every child's strengths and identify their next steps.

### Comfort and Joy

Before Christmas, St James the Less Church and Acton Aid were able to donate a sum of money to the school to be used to support those, who needed it most. There is still some money available. Please do speak to the office if you are struggling financially and would benefit from some support. This will be treated with complete confidentiality.

### World Book Day

This was due to take place on 4th March 2021 during Term 4. As we now know that schools will definitely not be open to all children on this day, we have decided to postpone it until later in the year when all have returned. We will be encouraging children to dress up as one of their favourite book characters. More details will follow once we know about school return dates.

### Dates for your diary

Event	Date and time	Information
Online safety day	09.02.21	
Last day of Term 3	12.02.21 3.15pm	
INSET day	22.02.21 All day	School will be closed to all. There will be no remote learning.
First day of Term 4	23.02.21 8.55am	Children who are currently in school can continue to attend. Remote learning will begin again.
Parent/teacher meetings	01.03.21 03.03.21	Appointments will be organised at the end of Term 3.
Last day of Term 4	01.04.21 3.15pm	

**Please note: these dates may be changed or cancelled if necessary. We will try to provide as much notice as possible if this is the case.**

