

Newsletter 1st June 2020

Dear Parents,

Thankfully, the sun is still shining as we return for the second half of the summer term. Welcoming our pupils of keyworkers in this morning, I felt very sad that I was not seeing all our children's faces and smiles. I would love to have them all back but know that we must continue to follow government guidelines as well as make the decisions need to keep our school community safe. I am feeling frustrated and impatient and I am sure many of you share these feelings with me but we need to focus on what we can do now and continue to work positively toward making small steps towards normality.

Thank you for all your ongoing support on the re-opening for year 6 and especially your understanding about the delay to this. I will write to Year 6 separately this week to confirm your children's return date and final arrangements.

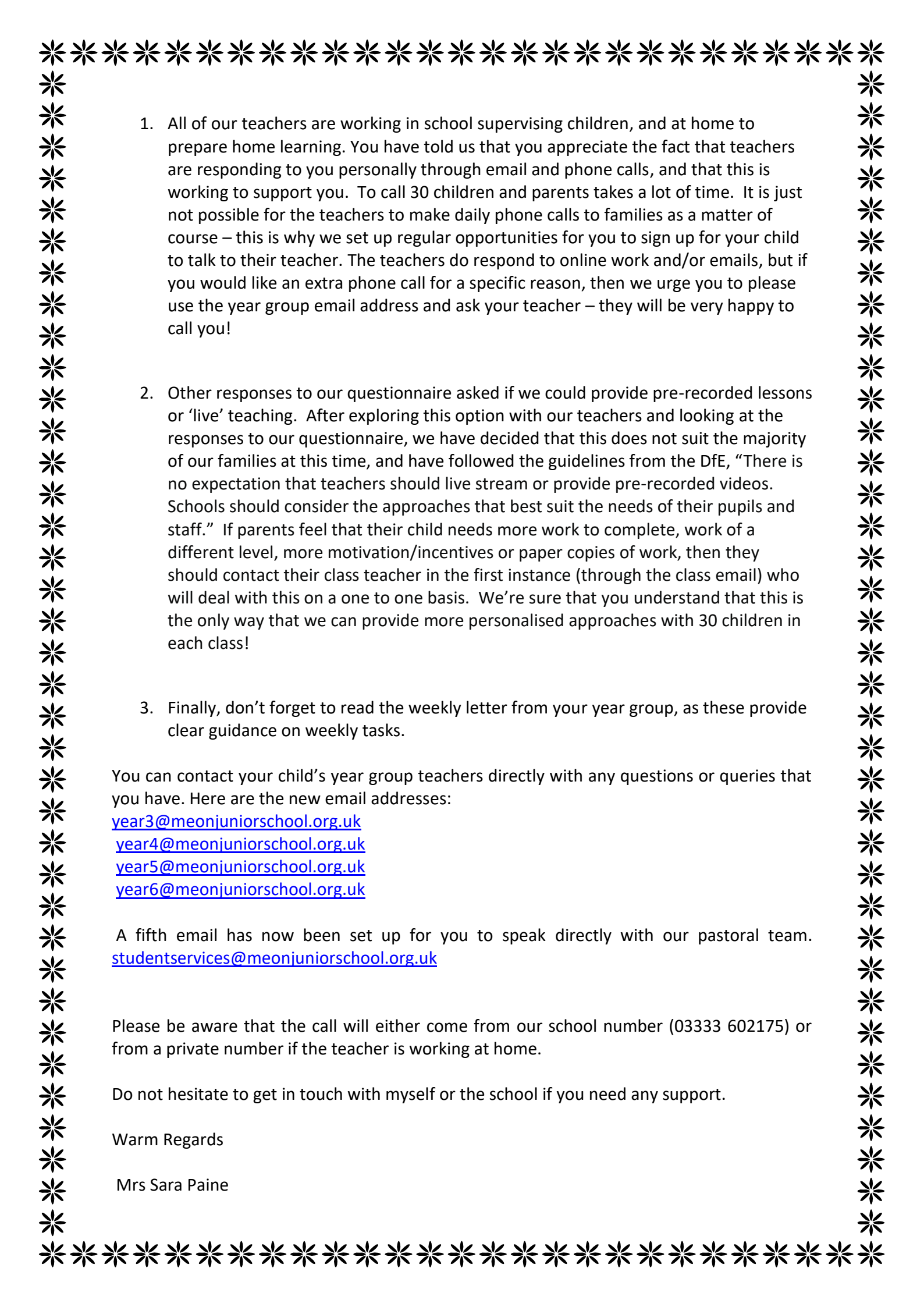
This week I wanted to give you some feedback on the home learning we have provided and the results of the questionnaire you completed at the end of April as well as continued feedback we have received from you. I wanted to send a personal thank you for responding so positively and sharing your thoughts about how we could help you more.

The overall majority of parents (both in the questionnaire and through contact with the teachers) are happy with how we are supporting you at home, although we have had some very useful suggestions about how we can improve this further – I wanted to take this opportunity to explain our thinking and why we have made the decisions which we have.

As we enter another week of home learning in all of its different guises, I wanted to make it very clear that our over-arching aim is for parents at Meon Junior School to feel **supported by school and yet not burdened**. We have over 300 families (with 344 children) who belong to the school, all with very different circumstances and numbers of children (along with differing opinions!). We are all doing the best we can with regard to home-learning and I strongly believe that based on our questionnaire and conversations with you, we have got the best balance possible for our school.

Staff have provided home-learning tasks and we would very much like all children to engage in the work provided - but not at the expense of the well-being of the primary care-givers in the home; this would cause more harm than any intended good.

Parents who have responded to our questionnaire have a variety of feelings - some feel that they are 'doing it wrong', 'not doing enough', or that others are doing it better or differently with a greater or lesser degree of success. **Please do not compare yourself to other parents.** Social media may be a useful tool for making connections, but it can also make you feel woefully inadequate. If, as Head teacher, I try to keep up with, match or mirror other colleague Head teachers around the country I would probably feel insufficient! Instead, I choose to focus on the things I can control; leading my fabulous hardworking staff and all of my families safely through this pandemic, based on what we as a school community need and want:

- 
1. All of our teachers are working in school supervising children, and at home to prepare home learning. You have told us that you appreciate the fact that teachers are responding to you personally through email and phone calls, and that this is working to support you. To call 30 children and parents takes a lot of time. It is just not possible for the teachers to make daily phone calls to families as a matter of course – this is why we set up regular opportunities for you to sign up for your child to talk to their teacher. The teachers do respond to online work and/or emails, but if you would like an extra phone call for a specific reason, then we urge you to please use the year group email address and ask your teacher – they will be very happy to call you!
 2. Other responses to our questionnaire asked if we could provide pre-recorded lessons or ‘live’ teaching. After exploring this option with our teachers and looking at the responses to our questionnaire, we have decided that this does not suit the majority of our families at this time, and have followed the guidelines from the DfE, “There is no expectation that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos. Schools should consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their pupils and staff.” If parents feel that their child needs more work to complete, work of a different level, more motivation/incentives or paper copies of work, then they should contact their class teacher in the first instance (through the class email) who will deal with this on a one to one basis. We’re sure that you understand that this is the only way that we can provide more personalised approaches with 30 children in each class!
 3. Finally, don’t forget to read the weekly letter from your year group, as these provide clear guidance on weekly tasks.

You can contact your child’s year group teachers directly with any questions or queries that you have. Here are the new email addresses:

year3@meonjuniorschool.org.uk
year4@meonjuniorschool.org.uk
year5@meonjuniorschool.org.uk
year6@meonjuniorschool.org.uk

A fifth email has now been set up for you to speak directly with our pastoral team.
studentservices@meonjuniorschool.org.uk

Please be aware that the call will either come from our school number (03333 602175) or from a private number if the teacher is working at home.

Do not hesitate to get in touch with myself or the school if you need any support.

Warm Regards

Mrs Sara Paine