

6 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we come to the end of week seven of lockdown, I wanted to touch base with you again to reiterate what a fantastic job you are doing. It has been wonderful to see the wealth of activities that the children have been doing at home. Thank you for all of the photographs you have sent in. They have given the teachers and myself a real boost.

Please remember that school is still open for key worker children so someone is always here at the end of the phone if you need to talk to them.

Home Learning

Please try not to be too concerned about children having difficulty with some aspects of the home learning work that has been set by teachers on the website, please do not try to complete work that is worrying your children (or you!). I know it can be frustrating when you feel like you've spent a long time on something and your children still don't seem to understand, but without teachers and support staff, there are some concepts that they will struggle with and possibly fail to complete. Without us being able to talk to your children directly and explore their thinking, it is hard for us to advise individual parents on the needs of individual children. If we were working under 'normal' conditions, at school we would be using the 'little and often' approach and going over the same thing but in lots of different, fun and practical ways. Remember this is not 'home schooling'; this is an opportunity for the children to practise and consolidate prior learning...you need to take each day as it comes and just do your best! If your child is finding concentrating hard, try something completely different, there are lots of suggestions on our website, maybe try completing the Covid-19 Time Capsule or create a Covid-19 memory box? If your child's mind wanders to other things that are unrelated to the work that is fine, there is no expectation from the class teachers to complete all of the work set. If your child is struggling, dip into the year group below, or if you think that they need more of a challenge, look at the year group above.

As I have said all along the mental health and well-being of your child and yourself is paramount so please **do not** get frustrated if your child is not engaging as much as you'd like.

School Opening

There has been a lot of speculation in the press this week about when schools will open. This is a worrying time for us all. Can I reassure you that we will be following Government and Union guidance in order to keep your children safe? I am working hard on a school action plan to ensure that we have considered all areas of health and safety and the logistics of a phased return. However, any return to school must be led by evidence of when it is safe to do so, not convenient dates in the education calendar. Safe for children, safe for parents, safe for staff and safe for the wider community. This is non-negotiable. I am sure we will hear more about this over the coming days in the daily Government briefing.

Trips/Residentials

Mrs Makepeace is working hard in the school office to refund any payments paid for cancelled trips due to COVID 19. As you can appreciate this is a lengthy process as all schools are in a similar position and Parent Pay is working as hard as it can to process these. Please be patient but rest assured you will be refunded in due course.

We are still trying to sort out a resolution with Kingswood with regard to the KS2 trip to the Isle of Wight. New guidance published yesterday (05.05.2020) should ensure that this is sorted as soon as possible. **'The Department for Education is currently advising against domestic trips (residential and non-residential) for children under 18 organised by educational settings'.**

New EYFS Starters

We are delighted to be welcoming so many siblings to EYFS this year. We have set up a new tab on the website where we will upload relevant information for parents until we can plan some transition activities. Go to: [Children-EYFS Starters 2020](#). Please remember to telephone the school office to confirm your place if you have not already done so. There is a waiting list for EYFS places this year, so confirmation is really important.

Christian Values

It is always lovely to hear about children using their Christian Values outside of school. Noah F who is in Year 3, has set himself a challenge to raise money for LOROS. He's been inspired by his neighbour who ran 100km around his garden and by Captain Tom Moore. He has a Just Giving page if you would like to read about his challenge and sponsor him. We are proud of you Noah and know you will do well.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/noah-fincham>

Collective Worship

As a church school, one of the highlights of our school day is joining together first thing in the morning for Collective Worship. As this has not been possible over recent weeks, I wanted to point you in the direction of the Oak Academy and TES who are delivering on-line assemblies every Thursday morning at 10.00am. This week in conjunction with Disney, the children can learn the circle of life from the Lion King. This is an all-time Disney favourite and may well be worth a watch. If 10.00am is too early it will be on the Oak National academy website later on.


St. Mary's Community Art Project

School is really quiet without the children and we miss them so much. Wouldn't it be fantastic if every child drew a self-portrait of themselves on an A4 sheet with their arms outstretched which we could put on the perimeter fence? Not only would it brighten up the fence but it would be a daily reminder of **who** makes our school community so special. If you would like to take part in this please draw yourself with your arms outstretched, colour carefully and add your first name only. On your daily walk you can post your pictures in the letter box on Station Road outside Picasso class or post them to school if you don't live close by. We look forward to receiving them.



As always, I want to thank you for your support and understanding during these very challenging times. I am proud that as a school we are trying our hardest to follow Government guidelines-to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives. Hopefully, we will be together again very soon.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Ayres
Headteacher