

COVID-19 Message from Mrs Hunt

Dear Parents,

Firstly, in these strange unprecedented times, I would like to thank you for your support in getting the children to school to date and responding quickly to the ever changing demands and needs. I appreciate it has been difficult for all of us and probably will not get easier for some time.

We have kept things as low key as possible for the children, talking about germs and handwashing and usual good practices around coughing (into the elbow) but responding honestly, at an appropriate level, if the children have asked.

We follow guidance in these matters and no decision is made without due consideration, guidance and advice. Some decisions are, however, totally beyond our control.

Plans are being put in place across the county to support our most vulnerable families and children, and if you have any concerns about children or families then you should have that conversation with us. I will also talk to the children before we finish today to explain to them what is happening and what to expect from school and what we will expect from them (key ideas being this is not a school holiday, we will keep in touch, understanding their worries and concerns)

Given that we have no idea how long these closures are likely to carry on for, I would really advise setting up a timetable with your child from the start (this will be much more difficult to implement later!) with lots of formal learning interspersed with Doodle; Music and Art activities as well as remembering times to be active and keep fit. This can be fun to do together and children have a sense of ownership over it then too. DAILY reading, spellings and tables are a must for this time. I can't emphasise enough how important this will be for your children and what a difference practising these daily in a targeted way will make.

We have been preparing for this for quite some time and have made suggestions and resources to support you at home to make sure that learning is not interrupted and your children do not lose out. If your child is not in school currently, please collect their books and any belongings from the main reception area on Monday.

We chose to make these available on the school website in the class pages so that staff can react to comments and work completed and add more targeted work to the list. We also, as I said, have no idea how long this will go on for and we're concerned that if we preprinted booklets you would run out. There were additional concerns about booklets getting lost.

I am hoping that you can use this as an opportunity to boost children's learning with intensive 1:1 tuition and have added additional targets to your child's consultation sheet so you know their personalised next steps.

We will be working on a rota system to maintain safe ratios within school.

Staff who are well and are working from home have clear expectations of what should be completed. You can therefore expect to receive responses to emails and Tapestry if needed. Please record your child's progress and activities in his/her diary and we would welcome pictures on Tapestry. When this is over the diary will be used to access what children have done. They will be checked, read and signed by staff.

From my point of view, I will maintain regular contact with you (weekly and when necessary) and I will be liaising with staff daily and with other agencies.

We use google docs across the school and this means that we can continue to work collaboratively to achieve our actions and we can all work on matters that will ultimately improve our school, in line with our current school development plan.

We are all on a massive and very steep learning curve, especially around IT. We are trying to embrace new technology (new to us anyway) to work in a very different way to be able to continue to have a presence in your children's lives. To this end we are also trying to arrange either voice or video calls to each child at least weekly. We will obviously set up key times for this to take place that are mutually convenient. More information to follow.

I absolutely recognise that, your children not being in school, may cause lots of anxiety and concerns about how to manage the situation.

This is new to us all and I am mindful that for the children this is all very strange.

I suspect the initial novelty will wear off and then you will be faced with lots of questions. I know some parents, and some children, are thinking ahead to leavers etc. I do not have the answers to these questions as yet, but I do know that I would definitely want the children to experience as much as is possible of the end of year activities and traditions as they would have. This means that they might celebrate in a different way at a different time but the occasion will be marked in some way.

Please find websites and some attachments you may find useful (social story explaining about what is happening to reassure a child if needed) and some art ideas by Maggie Spratt and some PE ideas from Levi Dailey.

It is heartening and humbling how so many have pulled together so well. I hope you and your families stay safe and well, in this very uncertain climate.

I have also attached a short video so that I can share with you some of my thoughts at this time.

Kind regards,

Sharon Hunt

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