

- Headteacher: Helen Collings
- Knighton Lane,  
Broadmayne,  
Dorchester,  
Dorset DT2 8PH
- T: 01305 852471
- [www.broadmayne.dorset.sch.uk/web](http://www.broadmayne.dorset.sch.uk/web)



Friday 29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Monday 1st February sees the beginning of Children's Mental Health Week, where we focus even more than usual on the wellbeing of our children. There will be lots of activities and ideas shared with you via Google classroom, and I hope you will find some of these useful.

With the announcement this week that schools will not return until at least the 8th March, I know that many parents and carers are feeling quite anxious about home learning going on for some time yet. I would like to take some time to think about our mental health, as adults, and as parents and carers.

All the things we speak to our children about, and teach them as part of our HeartSmart and well-being education, applies to us as parents and carers too:

- Are we getting enough sleep?
- Are we getting fresh air and exercise regularly?
- Are we eating well?
- Are we careful around our use of social media?
- Do we take time for ourselves?
- Are we kind to ourselves?

I can honestly say that I, and most of the adults I know, can't answer yes to many of those at the moment.

One of the things I've learned over my advanced years is that we act as role models to our children in so many ways, and if we can show them through our own decisions that making time for ourselves and looking after ourselves is important, they will learn that too.

It's OK to say no to things if it's too much right now, and it's OK to step back from taking on too much. If you need support in saying no, or permission to step back from home learning for a short while, give me a ring - I'm always happy to help! Despite our 'dress as your own superhero' day on Friday, we are not superheroes and we cannot juggle everything. Sometimes a ball needs to drop, and the trick is knowing which ones are glass - and which ones are plastic and will bounce back up another time.

I keep reading and hearing the media and politicians referring to our children as the 'lost' generation who will always be behind, who need to catch up, who have gaps in their learning which will follow them for years. I feel I need to tell you all that this is not true! This generation has been growing up in unusual times. They have learned to manage rapid changes around them, adults being worried and anxious, and their lives being impacted by a huge global event beyond their control. As long as we are there for them, and support them, they will emerge from this more resilient and stronger than before.

Talk of being 'behind' in learning is, in my opinion, very poorly judged. All of our children have missed out on parts of the curriculum - but that's OK, we will teach it once they are back! Our school quickly settled in September, and we will do it again once we are back together. No one will be behind as there is nothing to





be behind - we are all in the same place. I feel it does our wonderful children a disservice to talk as if they are deficient or lacking in some way.

My staff work really hard to provide a fantastic online learning offer, with a mix of different approaches to help engage everyone, but that doesn't mean you will want to, or be able to, engage with it all the time. You cannot replicate school at home, and there will be times when you make the decision to try something else, or at a different pace, or in a different order - or to just leave everything for a little while! We are here to try and support and provide for every family, and believe me, as many of us are parents ourselves, we know the struggles you are going through! Things we have found that help include:

- Having a routine or timetable for the day - get up at the same time, eat lunch at the same time, factor in some outside time - structure really does help
- Make sure your children attend the Google Meets in the mornings
- Do what you can do and then stop - practise the art of forgiveness for yourself when you need to step back
- Don't pay too much attention to all those parents who are 'smashing' homeschooling on social media - the rest of us are all wondering what chunking is and waking up in the middle of the night worrying about how much time our children are spending online

We don't know yet in what form the reopening of schools will happen, and it is dependent on infection data over the next few weeks. We will keep you informed once we know anything more, but I am hopeful that this provides us with a light at the end of the tunnel, no matter how small. Keep moving forward in whatever way suits you and your children best - keep in touch and let us know how you are, we always want to hear from you,

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Collings





Yours faithfully,  
Mrs Collings

