



Welcome to Chadsmead's weekly newsletter which I hope to send to all families each week whilst schools are closed.



I would like to start by saying a huge thank you to everyone. It is during times of such difficulty that you really find out how supportive and trusting our community is. I am proud to be the Headteacher of Chadsmead. Thank you for the positive messages we have received through the MyEd app. They have been passed on to all staff and have been of great comfort to us during these extraordinary times. Keep them coming.

Our staff have worked incredibly hard over the last two weeks, preparing for school closing and communicating with families. They have also been coming into school to provide care for those children whose parents are key workers. This role is completely new to school and is something that is evolving. A big thank you to Mandy in the kitchen for coming into school every day to make lunches for the key worker children and to make up hampers for the families entitled to free school meals.

Be advised that school is now running on a skeleton staff. This is in line with government guidance to reduce numbers on site. Children needing to use the facility have reduced over the two weeks from over 30 children to around 5. In light of new expectations announced by the government it was great to see such a responsible reaction by key worker parents (of which myself and many staff are) in finding other ways of childcare within their home. Government guidance remains clear – wherever possible stay at home and children are safest at home.

Please be aware we have a duty to keep in touch with **vulnerable pupils** who are at home. If a child has or in some cases have had a social worker, or is involved with support from the Local Support Team, or has various forms of other support, we are expected to keep up regular contact. This will be by phone. Please work with us on this. We will be calling from a withheld number so please pick up. We DO need to check in with both the parent and child to see how everything is at home.

Home learning has always been a difficult topic to address, only recently when we surveyed parent's, comments ranged from there is not enough to there is too much! Here are my thoughts; this is not home-schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting the whole world. Home schooling is a choice, where you as a parent would plan for your child and you are your child's teacher. Our current situation, at best, is distance learning. In reality it is everyone trying their best and we cannot feel guilty in these difficult times. The most important message must be that your child feels safe and protected at this most difficult time. Everyone's mental health is so important. During this time together as a family why not try things which everyone, no matter the age, can do together – sharing a book, some free writing, baking a cake or gardening. Try to strike a balance between supporting your child's work with family based activities. Over the Easter period staff will consider the work being provided and possibly start to introduce some Chadsmead Weekly Challenges where you can send photos of your children completing them to us. Some PTA members are keen to help with the compilation of these.

Finally, I wish you a safe and happy Easter.