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Coronavirus Update #8

24th April 2020

Dear Parents,

On Thursday I had an update briefing from Public Health England and the Local Authority. It is reassuring to note that the south west has the lowest rate of hospital admissions in the country. Although the virus is certainly present in our community the risk has been dramatically reduced because of all the preventative measures we have been putting in place. However, this is not a short term issue with a quick fix. Some form of preventative measures will be in place for a long time still to come and we need to persevere still.

The NHS is fully functioning in Torbay. The message is please to use it as normal if you need to do so.

There is no timetable yet for the reopening of schools. Teacher unions and the Local Authority are both making it very clear to the Department for Education that we need to be given plenty of notice about any re-opening so that we can properly plan. Hopefully I will be able to provide you with plenty of information well in advance. Until then we will continue with home learning.

Food Poverty

This continues to be the number one issue that families are dealing with in Torbay. **If you are struggling to feed your family or know others who are, please phone the school office and we will do our very best to help, for example by making a referral to Torbay Food Alliance for you.**

Torbay Businesses

Torbay Local Authority is working on projects to support the community and businesses. A community fund and grants are being set up. If you might benefit from these or know someone who might, please see their website for further detail: www.torbay.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse at Home

These challenging times can create extra tension for everybody. Please know that here at school, we are always open to listen, share advice and provide a safe place should you need it. Please also read the below message from the Local Authority that is being communicated by all schools.

Is having to spend more time at home because of the current crisis causing you anxiety or distress? This could be for any number of reasons. One might be because spending lots of time together just creates extra tension within families, but it will have more impact on you and your children if this extra tension is caused by domestic abuse at home. You might think that domestic abuse is something that happens to other people, but if someone is controlling your mind or finances, hurting your body, or threatening to hurt the people you love then that is domestic abuse.

Services are still available to offer advice, help and support during the current situation and you can access a 24/7 webchat facility with Victim Support via the Victim Care Unit website <https://victimcaredevonandcornwall.org.uk/> If you, or someone you know, is living with domestic abuse it is not OK. Always contact the police on 999 if you believe you are in immediate danger.

Information and advice can also be found on the [Are You OK](#) website together with a directory of services and some useful [toolkits](#).

Home Learning

There's a new feature on our LET'S SMILE page this week. Our amazing teachers and teaching assistants are working on special newsletters to celebrate children's home learning achievements and to help keep you entertained and smiling. First up is one from Reception. [Click here](#) to go straight there or navigate through LET'S SMILE.

The *Home Learning* section of our website is now updated with a *Resource Bank for Parents*. Here you can find all the links to excellent resources all collated into one place.

Please can I make an appeal directly to parents of children in Reception. We are still trying to engage more of your children in the home learning. If you haven't yet done so, please email the class teacher on either ash@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk or elm@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk. Mrs Russell and Miss Watkinson will set you up on the Interactive Learning Diary then your child can join in with all the fun you can see on their amazing new newsletter.

We're aware that sometimes it's difficult to access google classroom, especially on some tablets or ipads. Therefore, we have made a change which should help. So if you've had trouble before, please try again and you may succeed. If you have a problem logging in to RM Unify/google classroom, please contact ithelp@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

If you need home learning packs printing, please do contact the office or the class teacher and let them know what you need. We will have these ready for collection or posting every Friday in preparation for the following week.

This week, the DfE (Department for Education) has produced some guidance on how you might best support your children with home learning which is worth reading. One of the main areas you can help with is by providing routine and structure to the day by making sure your child:

- gets up and goes to bed at the same time each day
- has regular meal times
- has regular breaks
- makes time to be active - children are used to regular play at lunch and break times

In school, we use research carried out by the *Education and Endowment Trust (EEF)* as the basis for a lot of our staff training and professional development. This week the EEF has launched an excellent set of resources for parents. Click the link to find support with routines, tips for reading and ideas to help your child understand the world around them. Highly recommended. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-to-share-with-parents/?mc_cid=7dede45ca9&mc_eid=9af60fed2b

The following website provides support for children and families with special educational needs <https://contact.org.uk/>

Guidance on helping children aged 2 to 4 learn at home can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping primary school aged children learn at home can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping children with special educational needs and disabilities learn at home can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

There are some really excellent resources in the revamped *BBC Bitesize*, *Oak Academy* and *Sing Up at Home* that you might find useful to explore yourselves. These came out this week so you might find teachers will direct you to some as part of the work they set.

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

<https://www.singup.org/singupathome>

Mentally Healthy Schools Toolkit

An updated toolkit can be found here

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/2008/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-toolkit-3.pdf>

Covid-19 Reminders and Updates

The key message is still to **stay at home** and only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home). If you go out, stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people at all times. Wash your hands as soon as you get home. Do not meet others, even friends or family. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

If you have a new and continuous cough or a high temperature stay at home for 7 days if you live alone, stay at home for 14 days if you live with others, including all household members. Only use NHS 111 if your symptoms get worse or are no better after isolation. Guidance on what to do while staying at home if you have suspected coronavirus can be found here by clicking this link to the [NHS website](#).

The most up to date guidance for parents can still be accessed via this link and it includes lots of questions and answers that you might find useful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Department for Education helpline for parents - phone: 0800 046 8687,

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk, opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday) and 10am to 4pm (Saturday and Sunday)

Updates on COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

For games and resources about good hygiene and bugs, try the e-bug website which is being run in conjunction with Public Health England. [Click here](#).

Very best wishes to you and your families,



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)

KINDNESS RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY ASPIRATION