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Coronavirus Update #4

27th March 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope you are keeping well and managing to find some silver linings during these unprecedented times. I am very pleased to report that all our staff, children and families are well. As the week has developed, staff are gradually coming to terms with new ways of living, working and teaching. It has been quite a revelation to see how many positives have emerged so far, not least around the potential for remote learning, communication and training.

The atmosphere in school, whilst quite surreal, has also been upbeat; likely boosted by the sunny weather. We started on Monday with 49 children which reduced thereafter to between 20-30 each day. We've been running a skeleton staff, with members of all services in each day: office, teachers, kitchen and sites. As we get used to the way of working, we have been able to reduce our staffing each day while retaining a safe ratio. Activities in school have included traditional learning but with a much bigger range of active and outdoor sessions, mixed with frequent hand washing and of course, social distancing.

The school governors have kept up to date and continue to support. On Wednesday we had a remote Google Hangout meeting which went well with no IT hitches.

Free School Meals

On Wednesday parents came to school to collect the weekly food parcel. We staggered the collection times and took care to maintain social distancing. I would like to say a huge thanks to Sam Ward from *Growing Minds* whose perseverance enabled us to have a large delivery of these long life food items that our amazing kitchen staff put together into parcels. A massive thanks to Bernie McGowan, our Kitchen Manager, who was supported by Lisa North, Amy Heatley, Ruth Deeley and Naomi Williams. Have a look at the photos under 'LET'S SMILE' on the website home page.

In two weeks' time we hope to be able to organise further provision. This might be in the same format as above if the amazing Sam can manage to source further food or it might be in the form of government vouchers. We'll have to wait and see. I'll be in touch when I know more.

Sadly I have to make you aware that some people are trying to take advantage of the current situation. We have been alerted by the DFE that some parents have received an email stating:

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'As schools will be closing, if you're entitled to free school meals, please send your bank details and we'll make sure you're supported'. This is a scam email - do not respond, and delete immediately.

School Webpage Tips, Information and Smiles

Look under the Well-being in Action tab then 'Coronavirus Updates, Guidance and Help' or [click here](#). You can find a growing bank of information here that you may find useful. There is a new page about mental health that includes our school 5-a-day picture mnemonic that your child can talk you through plus a very useful document titled, *Mental Health Help* which has excellent links to agencies, books, websites and help in Torbay for your children and your family. It's well worth a look. Thanks to our governor, James Bennett for finding this. There is also a very easy to read short article about how to keep a healthy mind during this period of lockdown and there is a document called *Help for Parents* with further links and ideas.

Keep looking in 'LET'S SMILE' which you can find on our home page. It's growing daily with light-hearted stories, photos and funny moments.



Home Learning

From what I hear, it sounds like successful home learning has started to build momentum as the week has progressed. I know Mr Kelley's IT helpline was red hot early in the week but has settled as the week has progressed. There are now some lovely stories and examples of children learning at home on our website with a new page called *Home Learning Take Off* under *LET'S SMILE* found on the home page. Year 4 teachers are helping with routines by posting the daily tasks on their live stream at 8.00am each day. Reception teachers are making good use of their Interactive Learning Diaries. I hope you're managing to stay sane and juggle parenting and teaching.

As today is officially the last day of the spring term and staff move into their Easter break, please note that home learning will be paused until Tuesday 14th April. Teachers will provide signposts to activities but they won't be setting work or engaging in email communications / dialogue with their pupils and yourselves. I'm sure you can appreciate they need to spend time with their families and recharge their batteries. Remember there are tips to stay sane under our *Well-being in Action* tab.

School Opening Plans for Key Worker and Vulnerable Children Only

We have made staffing plans for the following three weeks. If you need this provision for your child please book through the School Gateway and only book for those times you need it e.g. you might only need a half day to fit with your shift pattern. If you have booked on and find you no longer need the place please contact the school office as soon as possible so we can take

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your child off and amend our staffing levels. As I'm sure you can appreciate, we need to keep the number of staff in school to the absolute minimum.

Over the next two weeks it would help us if you could send your child with a packed lunch every day even if they are entitled to a free school meal in term time. Of course, if you can't manage this and your child is entitled to a free meal, we will provide one.

Please note school will be fully closed on Good Friday (10th April) and Easter Monday (13th April).

Latest Government Guidance (26.3.20)

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.

The big message from government this week that we're being asked to share is ***stay at home. Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home). Stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people. Wash your hands as soon as you get home. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.***

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](#).

You can find further guidance for parents via this link:

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

Reminders

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>

I know these are tough times but we're feeling upbeat. We're adapting to life and we're motivated to crack on and see this thing through. Stay strong everybody and keep looking for those silver linings.

Very best wishes to you all and your families,



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)

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