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## Coronavirus Update #5

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents,

Although there is no official confirmation, it appears likely that we are bedding in for a new style of learning / working / life for the next 6 weeks at least. The official government line (1.4.20 – but not an April Fool) is that schools will be closed until further notice.

As such we are starting to make plans accordingly and I will keep you up to date as we go along.

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.

Although school is closed, we are still open for vulnerable children and children of key workers. This week we have had between 17 and 22 children in each day. We are now only using one part of the school to help reduce the amount of cleaning and staff needed. The children and staff are maintaining social distancing and keeping up good hand washing routines. Staff are working on a rota, and as you might imagine, are enjoying their days in school with the chance to beat isolation for a few hours. The children are continuing to enjoy a range of fun activities. You can see what they've been up to on our website under our *LET'S SMILE* page.

During this current time to help keep our staffing levels to the minimum, the school office will only be taking phone calls from 8.30am until 12.00pm each day. If you need to make contact outside these times, please email [admin@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk)

Keep checking the *LET'S SMILE* page. For those of you who know Frazer, he's keeping well and he's in our *Smiles in March* sending you all a big smile. As we move into April, by popular demand, Mr Thomas now has his own smiles spot to keep us all entertained: 'Mr Thomas's Selection Box'. Last Saturday he gave all the staff a big laugh and raised our spirits when he signed into our virtual staff video party wearing his tuxedo.

If your child is entitled to a free school meal (eligibility by benefits, not as part of the universal offer for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) we have made plans to provide weekly food parcels up to the week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> May. You should have received a letter about this on Tuesday this week. If anything is unclear, please contact the office.

1

*KINDNESS RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY ASPIRATION*

I can imagine that staying sane at home is a real challenge at the moment. To try to help you with this, I have collated some suggestions that you might find useful while you wait for home learning to kick back in from 14<sup>th</sup> April. Remember also, that our *Well-being in Action* tab contains more than *Coronavirus Updates, Guidance and Help*. There is information and tips that you might find helpful during this time of isolation. Look under *Supporting Families* for example where there is a bank of resources including a newly added short visual read called 'Understanding Anger'.

With so much happening online at the moment you might value some help and advice for families in the digital world. You can [click this link](#) for tips on games, apps, relationships and sex, safety and settings, health, wellbeing and parenting. It's a much respected site hosted by CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection). By following the link you can also sign up for weekly bulletins and newsletters. Search for *Think You Know* also for more insight. The link to the government page at the top of this letter has more excellent links to staying safe online.

In school we use an organisation called *Premier Sports* to provide additional sporting opportunities. This week they have launched a You Tube video channel on which they are releasing a physical activity each day at 3.30pm that you can use at home. Click the link to find out more: <https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCLNV8D56t6RV0wbsPnbnYeA>

Torbay library has opened up its digital library for free which includes eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, online resources and Ancestry, available to access from home until the end of April. You can access children's eBooks and eAudiobooks via their catalogue and many Disney titles have recently been added. The library staff are also hosting live events online, reading groups and online workshops. You can follow Torbay Libraries on social media and each of the libraries has a Facebook page and Twitter account. If you are not currently a library member, you can join online for free and get immediate access. Join by visiting the [Torbay Libraries](#) website.

Computer programming is part of the curriculum and a subject that is often enjoyed by children, especially as they get to build their own games. A company called *Code Camp World* is offering free online resources and learning. Go to [codecampworld.com](http://codecampworld.com) to sign up if you are interested.

For any budding young designers out there, there is a competition to design a new climbing frame. The winner will earn the school a brand new climbing frame which will help our plans to develop the school grounds. Full details can be found under *Curriculum Information – Home Learning – Information for Parents* or by clicking this [direct link](#).

If you are looking for creative activities, *Big Foot Arts Education* has opened up their website for free access to a wide range of resources that you can download. Follow the link: <http://bigfootartseducation.co.uk/free-creative-activities-for-kids/>

*Chatter Pack* – load and loads of free resources and activities that look fantastic [https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/resources-list-for-home-learning?mc\\_cid=7d9e0facf0&mc\\_eid=39c65ae04f](https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/resources-list-for-home-learning?mc_cid=7d9e0facf0&mc_eid=39c65ae04f)

### An Act of Kindness

As you might know, over the past two terms we have been making links with the local retirement home, *Dunboyne Court*. Our new friends from there supported our History project back in the autumn term when they visited to look at the children's work and have lunch together. They were also due to be back in March to look at the Science projects but sadly this was cancelled. To help keep up their spirits during this time, it would be great if you could encourage your children to write to them by traditional snail mail. Maybe, just a short letter or maybe share their learning while they've been at home. I know they really enjoyed looking at the History work and were excited to see the Science as I'm sure it brought back many memories and comparisons to their school days. Maybe your child could write to them about school life in 2020 and ask them to write back to describe their school days. I'm sure anything you can arrange to send would be hugely appreciated and would be a wonderful surprise. If you would like to get involved, please address it as follows:

Mr Phil Smith and Friends,  
Dunboyne Court  
Sanctuary Retirement Living  
170 St Marychurch Road  
Torquay TQ1 3AB

### Covid Reminders

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](#).

You can find the most up to date guidance for parents via this link:

<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](mailto: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>

Stay well everybody. Every day is a day closer to coming through this. Very best wishes to you all and your families,



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)