

Barewell Road
Torquay
Devon TQ1 4PA
admin@st-margaret's.torbay.sch.uk
01803 327090



Coronavirus Update #6

9th April 2020

Dear Parents,

Although it's still early days, the national and local picture appears more positive this week. I'm having reassuring conversations with critical workers on the school gates and national statistics are showing signs of a possible improved trend. As we abide by government instructions hopefully we can move more quickly through this challenge.

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.

I've heard from a few of our parents that Torbay Hospital and doctors' surgeries are fairly quiet currently. Although this is good news in many respects, there is some concern that people might be staying away who are genuinely ill with something other than Covid-19 and that consequently there might be a delayed build-up of cases. On our coronavirus guidance section on the website under 'Well-being in Action', I have added two very useful documents in relation to this. One is a letter from Torbay hospital explaining how the hospital is safely separated into a clean green (Covid-free) and a dirty red (Covid) zone so that the hospital can be used for normal business. There is also a simple visual guide highlighting what aspect of the NHS you should access depending on your symptoms.

I picked out some reassurance from the Department for Education updates this week which I thought I'd share with you in case you didn't know. In children, infection is usually mild and for the vast majority the coronavirus will not cause serious illness.

Planning for the Coming Weeks

Although we do not know for certain, we are working on the assumption that school will be closed until the beginning of June. As such, we have made plans to open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers as we are doing currently. If your child falls into this category you can now book online for the next few weeks via School Gateway. You should have received a text about this today.

Next week after the long Easter weekend, home learning will start up again. As before, children in Key Stage 2 will be using Google Classroom, children in KS1 will be completing work sent by email to yourself and children in Reception will be using the Interactive Learning Diary. From Tuesday 14th you can email the teacher directly using the class email (*classname@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk*). For help with IT issues you can contact ithelp@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

If you cannot access any learning online, please contact the school office and they will organise for packs of work to be posted out to you.

To help keep 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 adminteam@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

Next week, staff will be spending time working out how to best continue the business of education over the coming weeks and how we can use this time as an opportunity for further professional development. I will keep you up to date with any changes that might affect you.

If you look on our *Home Learning Take Off* page under *Let's Smile* you can already find out how our Hearing Support team has been getting on with their innovative ideas for working with our hearing impaired pupils.

It's not all about school learning at home however. I know many of us are taking this opportunity to help teach our children life skills. Have a look in the *Home Learning Take Off* page to find out how Ines has been getting on with gardening, cooking and cycling. You can also see her enjoying bedtime PJ stories with her tech savvy friends under *Smiles in April*.

Free School Meals

Last Saturday, the government made a change to its Free School Meal voucher offer and decided to offer them for this holiday period for those families who are eligible because of claiming benefits and not for the universal offer.

If your child is eligible for free school meals because you claim benefits, you should have received an email by now containing a 16-digit code and a link to a redemption website. This will enable you to access an e-gift card to present in the supermarket of your choice to the value of £30 per child which covers the two week Easter holiday period.

Please note there will be no vouchers after the Easter weekend. We will return to the weekly food parcels which will be available for collection on Wednesday 15th April as follows:

- Group 1: **9.30am** – If your child's surname begins with **A – H**
- Group 2: **10.00am** – If your child's surname begins with **I – P**
- Group 3: **10.30am** – If your child's surname begins with **Q– Z**

Online Safety at Home

With so much happening online at the moment, I have embedded a regular online safety feed into the home page of our website. It is from the trusted *Think U Know* website which has useful advice to help families through lockdown and social distancing. New articles on [Parent Info](#) tackle some of the key issues you might be experiencing, including:

- [Separated parents managing arrangements to see their child](#)
- [Supporting teens to cope with lockdown](#)
- [Looking after their mental health while stuck indoors](#)
- [Starting difficult conversations about COVID-19 with their child](#)

The *Think U Know* website is seeking your views to help better understand the challenges you face and how best they can support you. If you would like to contribute, please [click the link](#) to their survey.

Covid Reminders and Updates

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](#).

I wish you all a very happy indoor Easter holiday weekend.

Stay well everybody and very best wishes to you all and your families,



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)