

7th May 2020

Dear Parents,

We have reached the end of another week of the lockdown period, and I imagine that both you and the children are feeling the effects of 'cabin fever'. There is much press speculation about the Government announcement due on Sunday; and, whilst I do not have a crystal ball, I cannot see that it will be anything other than a gradual process, not a return to the normality we experienced prior to March 20th. It is important that we manage the expectations of the children at this time and support them that this will not be 'back to school' in the way they have experienced before. Throughout this time all the staff have sought to keep in personal touch with the children, to ensure meaningful learning activities for them to accomplish, and to enable them to feel encouraged and supported. Whatever is announced on Sunday, those principles will remain a key focus as we move towards the new normal that is to come.

The Department for Education published updated guidance for parents and carers earlier this week and I was asked to share the link with you:

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

I would also remind you that our expectation is that the children will attempt to complete as many of the activities set by their teachers as is reasonably practicable; our school website has a 'Websites to inspire' page under the Parent tab which highlights websites your children may wish to explore; and whilst we have posted there the links to BBC bitesize and the Oak academy, these are for reference only as they, particularly the latter, do not match our curriculum. As I have said frequently the mental and emotional well-being of the children is the most important consideration at this time, any learning activities are beneficial – be that baking, gardening, reading, playing dice games or imagining pictures in the clouds.

The Obsidian Art Gallery in Stoke Mandeville has launched a weekly art competition which the children (and yourselves) may wish to enter. Details are on our Websites page of the Parent tab. The gallery is well worth a visit once such activities are permitted again – it is situated within Layby Farm (near the Goat Centre) on the Risborough Road. We look forward to seeing any entries the children may make.

I am pleased to be able to share with you on our website on the Parent Tab under Short Stories three free short stories which Mr Hegarty, the author (who owns the copyright), has kindly offered to schools for the children. These short stories are not available in hardcopy. He hopes that the children will get as much enjoyment from reading the stories as he did in writing them for his grandchildren. He has donated them as he believes in the imagination and excitement of reading and that the ability to read is a primary skill required of every child. I hope the children may feel inspired to write their own stories, and I look forward to seeing them at some point in the future.

We have added to our VE day page a link to a website containing all sorts of interesting facts and ideas of how we can celebrate at home. You may wish to visit the exhibition outside the Methodist Church on your daily exercise time.

I do hope you are all keeping safe and well. Please do keep us up to date should your family circumstances mean that the children or yourselves need our support.

Mrs K. Tamlyn
Head Teacher