

30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents,

We reach the end of another week of this way of living, with the talk of a new normality at some point. I do hope you were all able to spend some time outdoors in the beautiful sunshine last weekend, before the rain arrived on Tuesday to make outdoor time a little less pleasant.

As this time is extending and we, as adults, cannot yet see the end of the restrictions, it is so important that we focus on the really important things of loving our family, and find all the positives we can. I am aware that a number of children are finding things harder emotionally as time is going on; they will inevitably be missing their friends and school. I know that many of them will be keeping in touch virtually, but it is just not the same as those daily contacts and 'secret' exchanges with their friends. If you feel your child is more 'down' and finding things hard, then may I suggest that you encourage them to write a physical letter to their friends which may contain pictures too. If that can then be posted, I am sure a reply would be sent; and the children would also have the anticipation, and excitement, of a delivery addressed to them. (This would definitely count as a writing activity for the week.) They can also chat to their teacher via the VLE if they are feeling uncertain or a little lost – to share is so important. As we have posted in classrooms around the school: 'Asking for help isn't giving up; it's refusing to give up.'

I would like to reiterate from my previous communications that your children should be independently accessing the tasks set by their teachers. At school we teach and encourage the children to develop independence, and the children can select their choice of daily activities as long as all (or as many as are practicable) are completed across each week. Although some activities do rely on use of the internet, each week has a number of tasks which are paper-based or practical. Should you be experiencing IT challenges (as many of us are at present) then do focus on these. Again, this should be something to encourage the children to have ownership of, and should not require adult planning, though we are grateful for the support you are able to offer in checking their understanding. This learning will be discussed when the children are able to return to school, but will not be formally marked. Following Government guidelines, these activities are designed to consolidate learning and skills, not necessarily for the children to gain new learning. They also fit within the guidelines of up to three hours of meaningful activity for our older children and less than that for our younger ones. Some children will be finding it harder to be motivated the longer they are not at school. VLE contact with their teacher is so important for this, as their teacher will be talking about the week's activities on the class chat. Routines at home support the children with understanding that, although they are not physically in school, they are still expected to complete learning tasks set by their teacher. It is fine to change the routine for emotional and mental health reasons (and to make the most of the weather), but the advice is that routines are helpful at this time of such uncertainty – particularly for children.

Next Friday is the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day. On the Parent tab of the website, we have added a special VE Day page, which has a simple PowerPoint presentation, some suggested activities and two specific resources which you may like your children to do. They perhaps could send pictures of their work to their teachers, and we hope to be able to share some of their work on the website the following week. I am aware that Mrs Craft has been

co-ordinating some activities in the village and there will be a display outside the Methodist Hall to enjoy whilst out for your exercise time on Friday.

On the Inclusion page, we have added information from the Speech and Language Service about their Parent Portal, which you may find helpful if you have any concerns about your children.

I have been asked by Florence Nightingale House to promote their main event in May, which is a Florence to Florence for Florence Walk, taking place on Tuesday May 12th. This is Florence Nightingale's 200th birthday and they are looking for 949 people to each walk a mile for FNHC. It's 949 miles from Florence in Italy to the Hospice, so they want to try and cover the whole distance in a virtual relay. If you wish to participate, you can sign up to take part for £2 online via this link:

<https://fnhospice.digitickets.co.uk/category/27394>.

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