

20th March 2020

Dear Parents

As you will be very aware, school as we know it will close indefinitely at the end of today. This is something unprecedented and not something any of us would have anticipated ever happening. I am very aware that these are going to be challenging times for everyone in many different ways.

We are very aware that our school has the potential to play a key role in supporting our families and we are all keen to do as much as we can to keep our community together in a new, very different way.

We will be running a 'virtual school' using Class Dojo as our platform. Following government guidance, we will also be providing childcare for key workers each day, including during the Easter holidays. The guidance is very clear that to protect everyone's safety, this should be **a last resort** only for those eligible.

There will be a letter later today providing details about how we plan to run our 'virtual school'. This is new territory for all of us, so I expect things will change and evolve over time.

We recommend that during term time children keep to a similar routine as when they come to school. It will be a different way of working from what they are accustomed but we expect all children to focus on their learning for significant periods each day. We will share our plan later today for how we intend to structure each day in our childcare service and you might find this a useful guide to making your own family timetable.

Unless school staff are unwell, they will be continuing during term time to work and support their pupils. Please bear in mind that many of the staff will have their own children with them when they are working remotely and so may not be as available to interact with the children during the school day very much. However, as a minimum you should get work set from each teacher each day during term time and they will response work the children have uploaded within 24hrs.

Children of key workers and vulnerable children are eligible for our on-site childcare. We have worked hard to get provision in place for this. Those who are eligible need to be aware that this is childcare and, although we will support children with their virtual learning, we will not be following the national curriculum. More importantly, the guidance from the government is very clear that children who can be at home should be at home.

Parents whose children are entitled to a free school meal will be provided with a voucher during term time for the value of the meal that would have been provided in school. I will write to further tomorrow about this. The Department for Education has said that there will shortly be a national voucher scheme.

We know that teachers and children are disappointed not to take their Year 6 SATs and have the due recognition for the huge amount of work they have done preparing for these tests. We will plan a way of saying goodbye to them properly when this is all over.

Appreciating what we have ... aspiring to greater things.

We know that many children are anxious about the gravity of the news at the moment and we will do our best through school routines to continue to support them. We are determined to find ways with you to support the children even though our routines are going to be completely different from what we have known.

I would like to thank you again for all your support and understanding during this very difficult time. We have been overwhelmed by your kind messages and good wishes.

Finally I would like to thank the staff team here who have shown incredible resilience and positively and kept things happy and as normal as possible for the children this week. You will see this very clearly on the video of assembly this morning that Miss Poole posted earlier.

As always, I will keep you updated with any news or further changes.

Best wishes,

Vicky Doherty
Headteacher