



St. Michael's Church of England Primary School



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Our school values: Respect · Kindness · Challenge · Forgiveness · Perseverance

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Dear Parents

As we enter the fifth week of school being closed I wanted to write to say hello and update you on a few things. I hope you and your families are safe and well, both in body and mind. I have spoken to several of you over the past few weeks and it has been lovely to touch base. Please remember I am always available via email to answer any queries.

These are indeed strange times. Life feels somewhat in limbo. It has however occurred to me that these uncharted territories have given us opportunities to appreciate some things we possibly don't get to in our hectic, everyday lives. I am getting to enjoying sitting down together as a family several times a day to share meals, rather than grabbing something quick on the go or tea being like a tag team event. Our daily walk has become something to look forward to and savour and it is a particular treat to discover wildlife re-emerging into the world. Yesterday we came across a lovely little creature which I believe may have been a weasel or stoat. We looked it up when we returned home to try and discover which and read how one resembled more of a sausage and the other a cucumber! I am afraid the little fellow did not hang around long enough for us to make this distinction so it remains a mystery. We also have a stork who has started to visit our garden most mornings (I suspect it is trying to get close to next door's fish pond). My house is the tidiest and possibly cleanest it has ever been! I have finally discovered the bottom of the ironing basket. I think it is hugely important in the face of all this worry and sad and often frightening coverage on the news, to remember to celebrate the positives and I hope you are finding space to find those little positives too!

Despite constant media speculation about what the end of lockdown might look like and when schools will reopen there is no official information about this yet. I am just as much in the dark as you. The only thing I am certain of is that right now our children and staff are in precisely the right place. At home staying safe.

Home Learning

Home Learning for next week has now been posted on our school website and I wanted to take a moment to say something about that. Every member of staff at St. Michael's believes that the most important thing at this time is that our children are safe and happy. Their mental health is paramount. The Home Learning that is posted is for you and your family to use however suits you best. We certainly do not expect children to be sitting working normal school hours or becoming stressed out by the amount of work they are having to do. If you can only get through some of it - that is fine. If your child only wants to do the maths that day - that is fine. If your child wants to spend the day building a den outside and does not even look at the Home Learning - that is also fine! We understand that these are stressful times and the last thing that the Home Learning is intended to do is put extra pressure on. Some of you will still be going out to work or working from home and time will be short to spend on home learning. For others, several people within the household may all need access to the tablet or laptop and time for each person will be at a premium. Please do not worry about your children falling behind. Every child in the country is in the same position. No child is falling behind they are exactly where they need to be – at home and safe!

Seesaw

Can I recommend Seesaw as an excellent way for your children to keep in touch with their class teacher. It can be used by you or your child to ask questions, to post completed activities and take part in challenges. The communication between your child's account and the teacher is not public (unless your child asks for something to be displayed to the rest of the class). The vast majority of our children (and many parents) have been using this and have found it extremely useful. If you are unsure how to access Seesaw please let me know and I will try and help.

White Rose Maths

For those of you using White Rose maths, you will find from Summer Term Week 3 the learning will link to the BBC Bitesize site. The planning for the weeks before this on the White Rose site will not be synced with the BBC site. We are aware that some children are on different weeks of the White Rose. This really does not matter and they can just keep going with whatever they are up to and simply start linking to the BBC site when they get to the Summer Term Week 3.

The Hub

St. Michael's is now part of a Hub School. The Hub is providing emergency childcare for the children of critical workers during this time and is based in 1 of 3 cluster schools each week. The message about the Hub is very clear. It should be used only as a last resort. Children are safest at home. Several of our staff have volunteered to run the Hub alongside staff from other cluster schools. I am immensely thankful to them for their hard work in helping to keep this vital service running.

Facebook

If you have not already found our new Facebook page please have a look. We are posting important links to information as well as a selection of stories for the children (or you) to listen to.

If you have lost any passwords, need advice or support with anything or just want to say hello please do get in touch via email and I will get back to you.

Finally, I am attaching 2 further documents with this letter. The first is a short letter for the children and if you could share it with them I would be extremely grateful. The second is a poem, written by a Mum in County Durham, which I found quite moving and wanted to share with you all.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J Paisley
Headteacher