



Ancaster
Church of England Primary School

Monday 4th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well in what has been a very bizarre period of time and will continue to be as time moves forward. With so many news stories circulating in the media at the moment about when children will be allowed to return to school it is important that we await any official announcement from the UK Government. For now, the situation remains as it has for the past 6 weeks, with school being closed and open only to those who need it for the time being.

I would like to begin by saying a huge thank you to all of the staff in our school. We are in the unique position where our school is classed as 'closed' but in recent weeks it has actually never been more 'open'. Our children/families working at home still need us; key worker families need us to provide care, Meal provision needs to be coordinated and we are desperate that learning happens for all of our children to the best of our ability. Despite not being in the physical building every day, staff continue to work every day sourcing/signposting work, creating home learning, communicating with parents/children and undertaking the additional tasks they have linked to their many roles and responsibilities, which helps our school continue to run. In addition, they also come into school every week, leaving the safety of their own home during this unsettling time and all of them have been incredibly selfless in supporting our local area's response to Covid-19. Many of our staff, myself included, also have young children at home and speaking from experience, trying to undertake my full-time job, parent my children, cook, clean, tidy (oh, the endless tidying!!) *and* homeschool in the confines of my own home can often feel like an impossible task. Most days, versions of those things listed happen-but not necessarily in that order. What I wanted to say to you all is that, as time goes on, we may become more used to the situation and what is happening but what we mustn't do is beat ourselves up for what we are not doing but celebrate what we have achieved. After all, our motto of Be the Best You Can Be, extends to us all!

A few weeks ago, I wrote to you and told you about my own personal experiences at home schooling my 6 year old son, Charlie. I received so many messages back from our parents who wanted to say thank you for the honesty and that they appreciated the words and tone of that communication. Whilst as a family we are in more of a routine now and he is somewhat complying with our requests to teach him, he still finds the process incredibly hard and our daily battles are often long, drawn out and rarely won. We continue to do what we can with him and his little brother in order to ensure that they are able to continue to achieve academically once all of this is over. From speaking with a lot of parents, and feedback from the Class Teachers, the messages that we are all getting is very mixed in terms of how much work is being completed at home. What we know is that some children will thrive learning in this remote manner and others will find it very difficult and challenging. As time has passed, I have asked teachers to send more work out during the week. This is certainly not to scare or alienate parents, but I would rather our parents had options with the amount/frequency of learning and are able to make decisions rather than being in a position where too few activities are being sent out, which in itself will cause issues. I am hoping that the balance is

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struck now for the next few weeks as we await to hear what the next steps are for our country and schools. In respect to the school work being set online though, the key message is the same-please do what you can and encourage your child to be as independent with it as possible, but please don't fall out about it or let it add unduly to your stress levels-undertake work little and often and take the time, as I said above, to celebrate the wins of each day!

I would like to signpost you to a couple of websites which are just fantastic and will allow you to take that step back. Both are Government funded and have been created to complement the National Curriculum. <https://www.thenational.academy/> The Oak National Academy is an online resource where teachers are uploading lessons each week for every year group. I have seen some wonderful examples of these lessons and the children loved the opportunity to have direct tuition within the video. The other resource is <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons> which also have interactive games and activities built into them and allow the children the chance to explore the concept they are being taught more freely. Our staff will signpost to some of this learning as it will fit with the planned activities that they are sending out each week, but if you are looking for more work then both of these websites are excellent for all year groups and for a multitude of subjects.

I do hope that you and all of your families are well during this time. You are all never far from my mind and I simply cannot wait until the day that we are all back together and school is fully operational but the overwhelming feeling from everyone is that any reopening of the school must only be when it is safe to do so. At present, without a date set, we do not know when this will be but what we do know is that we are all still here, we are all available and we can and will help in any way we possibly can. Should you need us for anything, the main phone lines are manned every day and you have all of our email addresses.

Take care everyone and stay well-I am keeping my fingers crossed that it will not be too much longer before we all see each other again as soon as there are any further updates I will contact you again.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Sam Eden
Headteacher