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Headteacher: Mrs J Narraway

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Dear parent/carer,

As we begin our sixth week of the school closure, I wanted to thank you for everything that you are doing at home. After speaking with parents last week, it is abundantly clear that everyone is doing the best they can under these challenging circumstances. We are delighted with the level of engagement the children are showing in their learning and we have seen some amazing examples of creativity, resourcefulness and life skills being developed in the children. We appreciate how difficult it must be for the children, as home is a place of relaxation not work and they are having to get used to it being both.

Returning to school

There has been much media speculation about the schools being opened, which I am sure is causing some concern to you. We have not been given any indication whatsoever as to when the schools will be reopened other than when it is scientifically safe to do so. We are however, beginning to look at what the process of transitioning the children back into school will look like from a curriculum point of view as this will need careful management to support both the children and the staff. The main priority is ensuring the staff and children's mental health is supported and that they feel safe and secure when returning to school – whenever that may be. Once that is in place, then learning will be easier.

Year Six Robins

We are currently liaising with the different high schools the children are transferring to so the process of transition is starting. After working so hard for many years towards their SATs, our Year 6 were probably disappointed not to be able to show off their learning. As yet we have had no guidance as to what needs to be done in terms of reporting assessments for the children. As soon as we have the details, we will contact you with the information.

Online learning

The experience for children across the country is very different, with some schools live streaming lessons for the children. We made a conscious decision not to do this as we wanted the home learning to be flexible in both the time it could be done but also the subjects the children did. In addition to this,



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we wanted to acknowledge how difficult live streaming would be for our staff, particularly if they are home schooling themselves.

On Sunday 19 April, the Government announced support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people who do not have access to a digital device during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. They indicated that laptops and tablets will be provided to support remote education and help children and young people stay in touch with social care services. Based on our school data and eligibility, we will be given a fixed number of laptops and tablets to support children in these groups, and it will be up to the school to distribute them to the children who do not have devices to access their learning.

Maintaining friendships with peers

The longer the schools are closed the more strain it will place on the children's friendships. We have heard of children having FaceTime together and groups of children using online chat rooms as a means of keeping in touch. I am sure many of you are already doing this but if not it would be worthwhile organising for your child to keep in contact with a few of their friends.

The platform you use for this is entirely up to you. As a school we have been advised by the local authority to use WhatsApp, Google Meet/Hangout or Microsoft Teams rather than Zoom as there are security concerns. This is what we have been made aware of:

- Zoom can expose your Windows passwords to other users
- Zoom video conferences and calls are vulnerable to eavesdropping
- Zoom leaks personal information to Facebook, even if you're not a Facebook user
- Local attackers can use Zoom to install malware

Maintaining mental health

The closure of school, the loss of friends and family and the impact of social distancing will undoubtedly have an impact on our mental health and well-being. It has been wonderful to see families taking walks, cycling and gardening to name just a few 'feel good' activities. It really is important to have some fresh air every day, whilst exercising social distancing. During these times, activities such as these are vital in maintaining a healthy mind as well as body. On our school website, under the 'School Closure' tab is a link to 'Maintaining your family's health and well-being' which has a number of different resources to support you, including this calendar for May.



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Sadly, some of our community have experienced bereavement during the outbreak. Again, our website has a number of resources to support you and your child should you need it.

<https://www.newchurchprimary.co.uk>

We are missing the children so much and look forward to their messages and photographs. They are the heartbeat of our school and the saying 'absence makes the heart grow fonder' is so very true – our hearts are ready to explode!

Take care Newchurch Robins, and keep safe and well.

With kindest regards,



Mrs J Narraway

Head Teacher



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