

Newchurch Community Primary School  
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Headteacher: Mrs J Narraway

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parent/Carers,

We begin with a message from Emily W King (a psychologist) who states:

*'Parents: What we are being asked to do is not humanly possible. There is a reason we are either a working parent, a stay-at-home parent, or a part-time working parent.'*

*Working, parenting and teaching are three different jobs that cannot be done at the same time. It's not hard because you are doing it wrong. It's hard because it is too much. Do the best you can.*

*When you have to pick, because at some point you will, choose connection. Pick playing a game over arguing about an academic assignment. Pick teaching your child to do laundry rather than frustrated that they are aren't helping. Pick laughing, and snuggling and reminding them they are safe.*

*If you are stressed, lower your expectations where you can, and virtually reach out for social connection. We are in this together to stay well. That means mentally too.'*

We are aware that as we reach the end of week two of home learning, some parents may be feeling stressed, overwhelmed, worried and under pressure with everything that has happened in such a relatively short time scale. This is completely normal. Some of you may be really enjoying the extra time that you are now spending with your children; others will be trying to juggle some form of home education whilst working as well. Others would quite happily send their children back to school – right now if they could!

We have loved hearing from the children through the online learning platform. If you are unable to upload work, that is absolutely fine but please check in with us with just a simple message to let us know you are safe and well. We miss the children so much.

Please be assured that we will continue setting home learning activities for parents using our online platform. Please do not think that your child has to complete all these activities. They are purely there to support you at this difficult time. We are never going to contact parents to see if your child has completed them, but we wanted to provide something that is there for you, if you want to use it. If you feel that it is too much, please just use whatever you want to or alternatively don't use any of it.

Structure and routine really help children so small bursts of work activities are much more beneficial for them. Remember to include breaks – lots of them. We do not expect your child to work from 9am –



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3:30pm completing these activities as it just isn't possible and unless they are very committed and dedicated to home learning, they just won't manage.

Remember, learning is far more than responding to tasks online and all of the following are just as valuable: cooking, cleaning, tidying up, playing family games, gardening, and form of physical exercise, listening to stories, reading, learning a new skill, craft activities, playing with Lego and imaginative play amongst other things. We have seen some really creative ideas over the last two weeks with children setting us Harry Potter quiz questions, creating their own story characters and writing stories to go with them.

As previously communicated, **no work** will be provided by school or expected from the children over the Easter break (6<sup>th</sup> April – 15<sup>th</sup> April) as staff will be working behind the scenes uploading new materials onto the online platform ready for 16<sup>th</sup> April. In saying this, we will be creating a new tab on the school website names 'Easter Fun' and if you are stuck for things to do with the children, perhaps you could try some of the activities out. These do not have to be shared with us, unless you really wish too and we would be more than happy to look at them.

After half term, there will be a two day art project for the whole school to take part in which is for Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April and Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

In week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> April, 'normal' online learning materials will be available. The learning resources will allow your child to consolidate and revise some key learning. New learning resources will be set every **two weeks** so feel free to select the order you do them in.

Some parents have asked us when they can collect their next pack of home learning up from school. With the possibility of spreading the virus and the restrictions on non-essential travel, we will not be printing out packs. Therefore, in preparing for the next half term, we have taken into consideration the questions parents have asked and any issues that may have arisen from home learning in the last two weeks. Going forward we are looking at making the home learning less paper based and include more tasks that can be completed using the resources you have at home.

As children struggle to deal with their emotions, frustration and anger can build very easily in a home environment. Therefore, where possible, we need to try and minimise the stress and if necessary completely remove the stress of home learning, if it is becoming too much of an issue. Just do what feels manageable for you as a family and remember your children and relying on you to be their constant source of reassurance and support; this can be very challenging and it is important that you look after your mental health and well-being as well. You can't physically do everything at the moment and that actually just being with your child, cuddling them and reassuring them is just as important as any form of home learning

Children will have good days, bad days and days in between and sometimes there will be no particular reasons for that and this can hard as a parent to understand. Here are a few tips for parents and carers:

- Stress and anxiety in such an unusual and unpredictable situation is normal;
- Friendships are key to maintaining resilience for children, so help them to maintain these relationships through phone calls, online communication and writing a letter;
- Normalise the experience for them by reassuring them that there are lots of other people in the same situation right now;
- Having a routine and structure helps children to feel secure in uncertain times (but don't make the routine and structure too unachievable);



- Don't put too much pressure on doing school work. Parents and carers aren't teachers, and it is important to also spend time building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children;
- Play is fundamental to the well-being and development of children of all ages, and a great way to reduce stress in adults and children;
- Please don't compare yourself to other families. Everyone's own circumstances are unique and everyone needs to deal with this in their own way.

On the school website, under the 'School Closure' tab, there are a number of resources, links to websites and guidance documents to support you and your family in their mental health and wellbeing. Here is the link to the website: <https://www.newchurchprimary.co.uk/website> We have also put on there an 'active coping calendar' from [www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)



It is with a heavy heart that we must include this in our letter, but bereavement may become a very real experience for some of our families. If you do find yourself in the position that you need support, please give us a ring, we will be here for you. We have also populated the school website with guidance of charities, websites and children's stories which may support you and your family to come to terms with your loss.

Finally, we just want you to know that what you are being asked to do at the moment is really hard and that we are here to support you, even if it is remotely. Everyone in our school community needs to focus on the most important things right now, which is keeping your children safe and getting through this as a family. Mrs Narraway or Mr. Duckett are in school between 8:30am and 3:30pm each weekday should you need to speak with them. The school number is 01925 763427.

Please stay safe everyone and look after each other.

Happy half term to you all!

The Newchurch Team

