

Newchurch Community Primary School  
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Dear parent/carer,

We hope you are all safe and well. We are loving seeing all of the children's photographs and video clips, they really make us all smile. Please keep them coming! We are so proud of how our school community is working together to demonstrate the core values of our school. We should all give ourselves a pat on the back – we're doing a fabulous job!

We have received our list of new starters for September 2020 and we are delighted to welcome our new families and siblings of some of our current Newchurch robins to the Newchurch Family. We are working hard on ways to enable them to have their transition into school under these difficult circumstances.

### VE day

Today, we have launched our VE day project. This is to help our families to prepare for Friday when the country will be celebrating Victory in Europe. We hope that you like the activities we have set for the children and please share them with us. If you would like to send a photograph of your celebrations to us, we will collate them into a video to mark the occasion and show our unity. As we are living through a historical moment, one of the tasks is creating a COVID-19 time capsule. It is hard to imagine that future generations will be studying this moment and even answering exam questions on it!

### Keeping in contact and seeing smiles!

When speaking with families over the last few weeks, what has become clear is that the children are missing the social opportunities being in school offers. The children are missing their friends. Some of the parents I have spoken to have said they have been FaceTiming classmates and have set up special times in the week for them to keep in contact.

We have been asked by a few parents to set up video conferencing between the class teacher and the children. Although this is a lovely idea, it leads to some safeguarding concerns for the staff and children. Video conferencing means that we are unable to control what the children see in the other people's homes as it is an unpredictable environment. If something was to happen, and the school had instigated the video call, then we would be responsible for putting children at risk. As you know, the safety and well-being of all our children is paramount and we hope you understand our reservations.



This does not mean to say that we do not encourage you to do video conferencing between the children, in fact we would encourage it, but it would need to be facilitated between yourselves as parents in the same way you would organise a play date. If you are not in contact with everyone in your child's class it might be worth using the class Facebook page to make contact and then organise for someone to set up a meeting for the children. As a staff we have been using Google Hangout and Google Meet which has worked well and is a secure platform.

The staff are very much behind the children keeping in contact with them through the messaging facility of the online learning platform and will be sending video messages to the children. Over the next two weeks the staff will be ringing the children up for a chat and see how they are getting on. In addition to this, they will be reading stories for the children to enjoy. This might be useful at bedtime to help keep a routine for the children.

### Free School Meals

The current situation will impact financially on our families. If you find that you are in a situation where you require support, please do not feel ashamed to ask for help. Mrs Heath is able to support families if they think changes in their circumstances would lead to benefits related free school meals. Information is on the front page of our school website. Please contact her via email [newchurch\\_primary@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:newchurch_primary@warrington.gov.uk). The government have established a national voucher scheme which will enable every child eligible for benefits related free school meals to receive £15 per week during the school closure.

### Returning to school

As stated in last week's communication, there is much speculation regarding the children returning to school. As yet we have had no guidance regarding what this will look like but is likely to involve a phased return. When the time comes, we are highly likely to be directed as to which classes will be phased into school first in order to maintain the safety of the children and staff. We are currently looking at the ways in which social distancing can be maintained should we be asked to bring in children and also the curriculum the children will have when they return.

Hopefully, since the school closure, you will have seen that the well-being of our children and families has been the primary focus. We are working on a bespoke curriculum for the children to follow when they return which focuses on the Arts, outdoor learning, PE, Music and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). We believe that these areas of the curriculum will enable the children to settle back into school life and support their mental health and well-being.

### Reading, TTRockstars and Numbots

One of the things that the children can do every day to keep them ready for the return for school is to make use of these subscriptions. We would advise daily use of Reading Plus for KS2 children to help increase their reading speed, which supports fluency. Equally, the TTRockstars and Numbots will help the children in their mental calculation. Just ten minutes every day will have an impact.

### Year Six Robins

The transition of our Year Six children is well underway and Mr Singleton and Mrs Wormleighton have been involved in Skype meetings with the Year 7 heads of department and SENCo in most of the feeder schools. The majority of our children are transitioning to Culcheth High School and over the last five years, Newchurch and Culcheth High have been involved in developing transition units in a number of subjects which help the children to be ready for the Year 7 curriculum. We have been in liaison with the



high school and it has been agreed that after the Whit holidays (week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> June) the children will be following the units.

### Online learning platform

As always the online learning platform is overseen during the school working hours. Please could we ask that any work is uploaded before 4pm so the teachers can look at it. They will aim to provide feedback before the end of the next school day. If you embed the work into the messages, that is fine. However, if you choose to upload it to your folder, please ensure it has your child's name in the title of the folder.

There have been some developments at government level which has resulted in schools being supported to move either to a Microsoft 365 or a Google Suite platform. Part of our ICT strategy was to move towards Google Classrooms as an online platform for learning as this is what our feeder high schools use. It is also a faster platform than eschools which is what we currently use. At this moment in time we are in the early stages and we are unsure as to when we will be in a position to move over to this platform. We can assure you that we will provide guidance for all our families, as we did for our current online learning platform, when the time comes. This is likely to be dependent on when we have more clarity on when schools will be resuming.

We are hoping that announcements this week will provide us with some clarity as to what the future holds in terms of children returning to school. In the meantime keep smiling, keep well and stay safe!

With kindest regards,



Mrs J Narraway

Head Teacher

