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Learning and Growing Together

3rd April 2020,

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very, very strange last day of term. Usually filled with our Celebration Assembly, judging the fabulous Easter Egg competition and Mrs Gawthrope baking Hot Cross Buns, it does seem incredibly different, but those times will happen again!

It has been really heart warming to hear of our community coming together in so many different ways over the last few weeks and I know that some fabulous activities have taken place. Our children are incredibly lucky to have such amazing support in their homes while you are juggling everything else too. I am sure you have had good days and not so productive days and it is all fine - keeping everyone safe is our priority.

In addition to the learning packs, online activities and useful website links, school staff are also working very hard at the moment developing additional learning materials on new platforms to ensure learning can be as immersive and interactive as possible during this time. There are plans in the pipeline for story readings, video calls, google classroom and art competitions during the Summer term, so watch this space...

For some children, a learning routine may be exactly what they need. They might thrive on structure and routine. They might be bored or anxious about not learning and may love completing all the online learning tasks that have been set.

However, please remember that during these unusual and unprecedented times other children may well be feeling frightened and unsure at present. Their routines and structures have been disrupted and they may well be feeling tense and anxious. If this is so, your child just needs these feelings to be acknowledged and to be reassured that you understand that life is just that little bit less predictable at the moment.

Under these circumstances, home learning may well add to this anxiety and stress – for them and for you. I want to reassure all parents and carers that you must feel no pressure to complete all the activities. Your children need to be reassured, comforted, loved and feel secure above anything else. So, please don't worry about not completing all the learning ideas that we have sent home or offered. Instead, cuddle on the sofa and watch a film. Share a book and talk about it. Go on a treasure hunt in the garden or around the house. Bake and cook together. Paint and sketch. Play board games. Travel the world via Google Maps. Look at old photos and retell funny family stories. Keep a diary and write about all the things you are going to do as a family when the world returns to some normality.

For those families who are struggling in supporting children's emotions; this is so understandable. I have detailed below some advice and guidance that parents may wish to use to support their families and themselves. These links are also on the school website. Please have a look through and select what you think will work best.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51936286>

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

School staff have volunteered to work on a rota to maintain childcare provision over the Easter Holidays for critical workers. We are so thankful to them for giving this time. I would also like to thank them for rising to the new challenge of remote teaching and learning, with many out of their comfort zones and juggling teaching, remote learning, childcare in school and their own families. Thank you everyone!

On behalf of all our staff and governors, I would like to thank all parents and carers for the positive support that school has received and felt over the last few weeks. Hopefully, you can all take some time to rest and switch off over the next couple of weeks as recharging is more important than ever. I am sure you will also join me in thanking the critical workers who will not have this opportunity as they play their important role in managing this situation.

Our school families are very much in all our thoughts and we all look forward with positivity to the time when we can be all back together again. In the interim, please do take care of one another and stay safe.

Kind regards,

D.A. Stephens

David Stephens
Executive Headteacher

