



LIVE - LOVE - LEARN

'Enabling every child to fulfil his/her potential in a nurturing Christian environment.'

19th March, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to say a huge thank you to all our families for your understanding and support during the last few weeks. The staff have been strengthened by your kind words. I am also incredibly proud that every family has now signed up to the new School Spider communications system and pupil virtual learning environment. It shows the commitment we all have to work collectively and compassionately as a community despite times of great adversity.

As none of us know how long school closures will continue for we are currently approaching the future in 3 stages:

Short Term (next week)-

The current events are unprecedented in many of our lifetimes. I am sure there will be lots of parents, children and extended family who will be frightened and unsure how they will cope in the coming days/weeks/months. At Utkinton CE Primary School, education, be it at home or school, is about the whole child. Now, more than ever, we need to nurture our children's and family's emotional and mental wellbeing and ensure that they feel 'connected'.

During next week do not worry about potentially battling with your children to set up new, academic routines. Use this opportunity to spend quality time with your children and family: read books you love; colour in/paint a picture; help cook the dinner and then eat as a family; design and build something amazing with Lego or construction sets; plant some vegetables and watch them grow - then cook and eat them; learn and practise a life skill e.g. how to make a bed, clean a bedroom, make a cup of tea/sandwich, washing dishes; talk to other family members using Facetime/Whatsapp and tell them that you love them; bake a cake (including measuring the ingredients); build a den - inside or outside; take advantage of the many virtual visits available on the internet (there is a good list on: http://howtohomeschoolforfree.com/huge-list-of-virtual-field-trips/?fbclid=IwAR2FGApBZNYGvGlcxwgO0jScBqHGwB0VUR0W1_ffA78TwAxlwaHcJE0WNpw); dance to a favourite tune; play a board game with your family; research something you could do to look after the natural world and make a commitment to making our world a better place for nature e.g. bees, single-use plastics, palm oil; have a go at mediation or yoga on 'youtube'; write a poem, story or song and if you are not in self-isolation go for a walk (you can take advantage of the free National Trust places to visit- <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/the-national-trusts-latest-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19>).

For anyone looking for advice re mental health the following NHS webpage has links for support of all mental health needs: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>. For general mental health/wellbeing ideas for children and adults, Rest Easy is an approach that we are developing at school and their Facebook page has lots of useful ideas: <https://www.facebook.com/resteasymethod/> .

The only activity it would be useful for children to do during next week will be to log onto the VLE, change their avatar (if they haven't done so already) and make a contribution to their class's 'discussion' on the VLE. Each Class Teacher will post up some discussion starters during the week for children to get used to logging on, contributing and interacting on-line. (For younger pupils it would be helpful if a parent/older family member could help them with the typing.)



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Medium Term (till the end of April)-

Rather than giving the children 'time-filling' exercises with little education benefit, we have decided to, where possible, use resources and activities from our current curriculum/provision. Therefore, tomorrow (Friday) afternoon, we will have a pack for each child to take home with any books/resources they will need during the closure. Any family who is unable to pick up a pack due to self-isolation will have theirs delivered to their home during next week.

As of the week beginning Monday, 30th March, Class Teachers will upload a weekly email on their classes VLE 'Homework' page with English and Maths activities for the week (and ideas for parents to support/teach their children). In addition, as of the beginning of the Summer Term, on 20th April, there will also be half-termly emails with suggested activities for other subjects related to the class topic, which the children can post up on their 'Scrapbook' on the VLE. A letter with more information about the English and Maths tasks will be sent out tomorrow with the packs. Please can any families who also require stationery with their packs e.g. pencils, pens, rubber, sharpener and/or ruler let the School Office know by tomorrow by 1pm.

Long Term (May and beyond)-

If the school closures are going to be extended well into the summer term we will look at developing live video conferencing e.g. microsoft teams, Zoom, etc to provide the children with face to face contact with their teachers and class/school friends and more focused teaching of English and Maths. We will let you know more about this if the need arises as we will need to find a way to make this accessible for all.

We are currently waiting for further guidance on who the government identifies as 'key workers' and what their options regarding school access/childcare will be. I am anticipating that we will be able communicate this to you tomorrow.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the School Office or speak to a staff member. The admin@utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk and head@utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk will be monitored throughout the school closure and emails forwarded to other staff as appropriate. We will do our very best to support you and your family.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Pleavin