

24.3.20

Dear Parents/Carers

Although it has only been a few days since I have been in touch with you all (and only yesterday for those accessing the child care provision) in some ways it feels like a lifetime.

What a difference a week can make. This time last week I was asking staff to start preparing for a potential closure, thinking that maybe a slightly extended Easter holiday was on the cards. Little did we know what the next few days would bring. Friday was a very strange day in school. I spent the whole day feeling a bizarre mix of unease, sadness and, at times, like it was just the end of term.

I went into every Primary class on Friday, and as many Secondary lessons as possible, to say a fond farewell to the pupils. I made them two promises - that their teachers would be in touch every day supporting them at home via our online platform, and that I would be in touch with you all and them once a week - more on that further down. However, in return I asked for one promise from all of them. A simple one, I hope. I asked them all to **be kind**. To be kind to their siblings who they will now be spending more time with. And of course, to be kind to you, their parents. I hope that, in times when things are likely to get a little strained, we will all be kind to each other as well as ourselves.

I can only begin to imagine what you are all having to juggle at home, balancing your own work with home schooling and everything in between. I take my hat off to you all. And I thank you. I would also like to relay a message to you all that I emailed to all staff today in my daily communication. This is **a marathon, not a sprint**. It is very easy to become overwhelmed by all the resources that are coming your way, directly from us but also from the global community. You can't be expected to do everything, so please don't try. We are trying to get the balance right in the work we set, but this is new territory for us too. Please don't worry if you don't feel you are ticking every box - your mental and physical well being is just as important as your child's and ours. Give them time to do some painting, chat with their friends who they will be missing, play in the garden. This is a huge cultural shift for us all, and it is going to take time for us all to get used to these online communities and keeping up with the world around us, whilst trying to focus on those in our immediate circles at the same time. Nothing sums this up better than the classic Aesop's fable of the Hare and the Tortoise - **'slow and steady wins the race.'**

With all of this in mind, please be assured that many of the 'extras' we are putting on SMHW are just that - extra. And they are to be used across the weeks and months. I know that many of you have already seen and enjoyed Mr Hanna's first Primary assembly (I am worried he is going to map out a whole new career for himself!). These will be coming out weekly, not daily, and so you have time to use these at your leisure whenever you feel able. I hope to be joining Mr Hanna in some of these, and we are looking to put something similar



in place for Secondary with the Heads of Years over the coming weeks. But we also are ensuring we can walk before we run.

As mentioned, **I will be sending you an email once a week on a Friday**. This email is actually an extra one, and my first proper weekly email will come out at the end of this week. Obviously, if there is any pressing communication in between I will email that separately but, where possible, I want to keep things pulled together in this weekly email so that you don't miss anything. I will also try to keep it more brief than this one. Much of this email will be simply me checking in with you all, and saying hello! I would ask that, where possible, you read some of it to your children as well as I want to be able to say hello to them too. It is more important than ever that we stick together as a school community.

Before I sign off for now, there are two bits of housekeeping to let you know about before Friday:

- **Childcare provision** is an ever changing picture nationally. If you are signed up to this in anyway, please do keep an eye on your emails over the coming days as things evolve across the country. We are exceptionally grateful to the approach you have taken towards this provision and are considering a more manageable way of you signing up going forward, but until Easter please use Parent Pay as outlined.
- **House Points** will continue! Staff are issuing house points for great home learning submissions, which will mean weekly emails on a Monday from me for those pupils who have excelled, and still lots more to go until the annual House cup is decided.

Until Friday...

With very best wishes,

**Mrs L New**  
**Principal**