

Tuesday 31st March



Dear Parents,

I hope you are all safe and well and enjoying some of the activities sent out to you. Although we have sent ideas and suggested timetables, there are no expectations from us about what you and your child does or doesn't do. These are very unusual and unprecedented times.

We understand that children may be scared right now. They see and hear lots even when we think they don't, their routines and structures are disrupted and they will feel the tension and anxiety from the adults around them. It is a completely new situation for them too - they may well expect the weeks ahead to feel like the summer holidays; we know it will feel very different.

They may react to all this by changing their behaviours and demonstrating behaviours you have never seen from them before. This might be difficult for all of you but it is natural and to be expected. Your child just needs these feelings to be acknowledged and to be reassured that you understand that life is just that bit less predictable at the moment.

Under these circumstances, home learning may well add to this anxiety and stress - for all of you. In that case, leave it. Your children need to be reassured, comforted, loved and feel secure more than they need to be learning. So, don't argue and fall out about any of the things we have sent home or provided. Instead, cuddle on the sofa and watch a film, share a book together and talk about the story. Bake and cook together. Paint pictures, create with play dough or craft things. Play board games. Go on virtual tours of museums, art galleries and zoos. Do jigsaws or puzzles. Build dens and play hide and seek. Build with Lego.

However, for some children, it may well be exactly what they need. They might thrive on the structure and the routines. They might be bored or anxious about not learning. They might be desperate to see their classmates and their teachers. They might love the work and fly through the different tasks.

Your child might be both of these children! Most children will be. Follow their lead, and use your gut instinct. You won't go far wrong. Stay in touch with school through twitter and email and look out for messages from staff or Marvellous Me. Don't worry about their academic progress. Every child is in the same boat at the moment; they will all be ok. When we get back to school, after celebrating being all together again, we will pick up from where we left off. There will be no national tests this year.

So use the resources, or don't. Your child's emotional and mental health (and yours) is far more important than anything else. How they felt during this time will stay with them for the rest of their lives, far longer than the worksheets or online learning tasks.

Phone call - School may make a short phone call to you with a focus on welfare rather than learning. We will be using the following questions to ensure that we can support you:

- How is the child/young person? How are the family?
- What has the child/young person been doing?
- Is there anything school can provide to support remotely?
- What does the support network for your family look like? (access to food, medication etc)
- Does the family, child or young person have any questions and would they like to say a quick hello?

These phone call checks are on a voluntary basis with your best interest at heart. We hope that you will want to participate.

Be kind to each other and stay safe. We can't wait to see you all again soon.

Mrs Watson, Overfields Primary School Head Teacher.