

Dear Parents,

These are strange and difficult times, times that will live long in our memories, times to mind each other.

- Lots of us are feeling stressed, overwhelmed and under pressure. This homework is not meant to add to the pressure either on you or your children.
- This is not home-schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency. Home schooling is a choice involving discussion and planning. This is, at best, a type of distance learning. None of us chose this. We are all struggling – families and schools – to find a way to help our children. We, as teachers and as a school, are trying to learn on our feet and develop new ways to help you.
- You do not have superhuman powers. If you are still going out to work, if your family home is very busy or you are working from home, then cut yourself a break. It may not be possible to get this work assigned here completed. There are other ways to learn. More fun and relaxing ways to engage.
- Learning is not to be found only in work or textbooks. Reading – let children read to you or you to them, regardless of their age. Lego, cooking and playing outside, preparing projects or presentations for the whole family on topics they love – this is valuable learning. If they are old enough let them work independently. Keeping a diary and free writing are important. Draw, paint, scribble, make things, play is the most important learning of all. Perhaps write to your grandparents or interview them on skype.
- Children are anxious and stressed. Talk to them. Explain that we will be OK. They will never forget these times. They need our care and love. School work should not become a battleground for tension and stress. We do not want our children to remember this time as that. Care and Love are at the centre of what we do.
- Don't worry about your child falling behind if they do not complete the work. If they are reading, playing, helping you and outside they will be fine. Get them away from screens for as long as you can, but use screens when you need to. Children learn at different rates and have different strengths. If a book or computer alone could teach a child there would be no need for schools. We will return to school and when we do the experience and expertise of our teachers will ensure that all our children progress.

We miss school, I miss seeing the children, their fun and energy brightens my day. I enjoy their company and I like helping them. I am proud of our school and we will get through this. We will learn new technologies, but they are just a help. Our real strength will be in understanding and helping each other. We will stay in touch.

Finally, a special mention and thanks to all who continue to work outside the home to keep our country functioning especially in the medical profession. We are indebted to you.

Mind yourself and mind each other.

Liam Fell