31st March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we enter the third week of a very different way of life, I just wanted to get in touch with you to reassure you that you are doing a great job!

Many of you will be feeling worried and anxious with everything that is happening in our world at present and for many parents, the work sent home for children following our closure may feel like an added pressure.

Remember! You are not ‘Home-schooling’. ‘Home-schooling' is a decision taken by a parent/carer to remove their child from formal education. This is not a decision that you have made after careful consideration of a range of factors. We are now in an extraordinary situation that none of us could ever have foreseen, the result of which means that schools are engaged in ‘remote learning’ and parents have suddenly found themselves in the role of the teacher. These are positions that are alien to us.

Our advice...do the best that you can. Please do not feel that you must become a teacher overnight and remember too that you know your child better than anyone. The Pupil Learning Packs sent home a few weeks ago will provide activities for your child to remain engaged with learning. Nobody is expected to complete every single activity. There will be days when your child is eager to complete school set tasks, other days when they are not. That is fine. If the sun is shining, leave the formal work for another time and spend some time in the garden, if you can. Learning Packs can be supplemented by getting regular exercise, playing games outside and inside, reading, listening to stories, completing puzzles, cooking and baking together, helping at home to prepare snacks and lunches and even watching TV!

Many of you will now be working from home. This is challenging enough without the added pressure of trying to teach your child. Much of the work provided in our packs will be revisionary and should allow your child to work independently at times. We hope that this will allow you to focus upon important elements of your own work that need attention.

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Schools are closed indefinitely. The Pupil Learning packs provided by our staff should provide ample work for between now and the Easter Holidays. We would encourage you to treat the holidays as exactly that. Give your child, and yourself, a break from everything. After Easter, our staff will continue to provide ‘remote learning’ materials in a different way via our website. A password will be issued by text closer to the time.

Due to the indefinite nature of this closure and mindful that you as parents, will be aiming to achieve a balance at home, we would encourage in the longer term that you focus on a few key elements of learning....

Where you can.... Ensure that your child reads or is read to each day. Older pupils can continue to use Accelerated Reader. Prepare for an element of Maths, such as learning tables, reading time, exploring money, measuring with cooking or problem solving, counting and exploring language such as taller, shorter, most, least etc

Try to include physical activity every day, build with LEGO, or create with junk materials that usually find their way into the recycling bin. Sort toys, paint if possible, cut and stick. Our Facebook page has a detailed list of online learning opportunities to supplement those already suggested through packs.

Please do not feel pressurised into doing **everything** we have mentioned. That will not be possible at home as you juggle other commitments. These are ideas and suggestions! You will know what suits your circumstances.

Most importantly of all though, keep safe and look after each other.

Our children will be worried. Their minds will be filled with questions. They will miss their friends. Your encouragement, positivity, time and of course love will help them more than anything to navigate these difficult times and come out the other side, ready for what the future brings.

Take care.

Kind regards

*Gavin Gallagher*

Principal