

Galleywood Infant School

Thursday 16th April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you all keeping well and managed to have an enjoyable Easter weekend, despite these very strange circumstances.

Many of our families and staff are really struggling with not being able to see family members who are far away, or maybe isolating because they are in vulnerable groups. It is lovely to hear about ways people are using technology to stay in touch, for example using Skype, Facetime or similar platforms to play board games, read to grandparents, enjoy physical workouts together and set one another challenges! If you have come up with a brilliant idea, tell us & we will share it with others.



There are various news stories emerging about how the UK may emerge from the lockdown and we are very hopeful that this will enable us to be together again as a school community this summer, but no official guidance has been issued. We will let parents know as soon as we know when and how this might happen.

The planters at school have looked spectacular this spring, we are sorry you were not here to enjoy them:



All our teachers have been contacting families by phone, sometimes using the school office but also working from home, when you will see No Caller ID. If you are unsure about answering these calls, teachers will leave an answerphone message suggesting a time to contact you again and will always begin the call by announcing who they are. No calls are ever recorded.

Thank you for all your responses so far, which has enabled us to gain a picture of some of the joys and challenges of home schooling in these strange times. We have been overwhelmed by your positive comments thanking school staff for learning packs - I echo this thanks to the whole team, including the delivery service! I am aware that most of the online learning platforms have struggled to cope with the number of learners logging on, leading to frozen screens and lost work. This is frustrating, but we are told the systems are being continually improved so don't give up!

Many of you are endeavouring to work from home in the current lockdown situation and finding it difficult to give as much time as you would like to learning tasks when you have a constant stream of work-related emails, conference calls, etc. We completely understand, with many teachers in this position too. I hope the discussions with class teachers have reassured you that we are not expecting anyone to replicate a school day; the learning we provide is for you to adapt, dip into and use in whichever way suits your circumstances. Although it doesn't feel like it, this would be your child's Easter holiday and we all need some switch-off time to enjoy the spring weather.



Larger families have found it hard to prioritise electronic devices, when laptops and tablets are needed by children of different ages. You have also told us that printed materials tend to hold children's attention and allow them to work independently. For these reasons we have invested in some maths workbooks for children to practise maths skills, and have photocopied English tasks, which will be included in the packs you will receive next week, sometime during the week beginning 20th April.



There are some excellent new resources coming online; we are conscious of not bombarding people, but feel these two sites are perfect for dipping into for some ideas and inspiration:



For more than 50 fabulous, fun ideas: <https://abcdoes.com/home-learning/>



For lots of subject based content, where children can follow their own interest, as well as the promise of daily lessons from Monday 20th April: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z3g4d2p>

With fewer staff in school there may not always be somebody in the office to answer calls but our admin email is monitored constantly, you have your teacher's email address and can contact me on sarahmanning@galleywood.essex.sch.uk; we may not have immediate answers but can certainly try to find any information or support you require and get back to you.

With many children spending more time on screens please make sure you are up to date with the most recent information about keeping children of all ages safe online:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/4_7/

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

We send our best wishes to every family, hoping that you stay safe and well. Make the most of the spring sunshine and enjoy some walks around Galleywood. Please ensure you stick to footpaths across farm land and please keep dogs on leads near farm animals.



We hope to welcome everyone back to school
as soon as possible

