

February 2021 Newsletter



2nd February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we enter our 5th week of remote learning, we would like to say a massive well done to you all for your efforts. We understand how challenging this has been, trying to balance home schooling with working from home, while maintaining some normality for the sake of all the family's mental health. Therefore, it seems fitting that we send this newsletter to you at the start of ***Children's Mental Health week***. Please look at the school website on the Learning from Home tab, Activities for the whole school.

We will be using our small group live lesson time this week, for 'Time to Talk' sessions. We will be talking about our emotions and what we are feeling. We will talk about activities we can do to improve our mental health, including non screen time activities.

As a school we have tried to provide structure for the children at home with a blended approach of live and recorded lessons, as well as building in time for children to complete tasks independently and have time away from the screen. This is all in line with the government's recommendation that schools provide an average of 3 hours across the cohort for KS1 children and less for younger children and 4 hours for KS2 children. Our offer is the same for the children of critical workers in school and children working at home.

As much as possible, we have tried to reassure parents that we understand the need for flexibility with regards to work set. As a minimum, we would expect children to complete the maths and English elements of the curriculum and upload for their teachers to feedback on the day. The foundation subjects can be accessed at any time during the week with a more flexible approach to uploading tasks. **No task should require more than 30 minutes independent work from your child, which would be in line with what we would expect them to do in class.**

Please note that we have a duty to provide remote learning for all of our children, which is why we encourage them to register with their teachers each morning. If your child is ill and will not be accessing remote learning on a particular day, please let us know as you would normally do through a phonecall or parentmail so we can adjust our school registers. If a child is not registered and we haven't heard from you, we will make every effort to contact you to check that everything is ok. If we cannot contact you, your child will be marked with an unauthorised mark. Of course, if you have problems accessing remote learning, then please contact us in the school office and we will do our best to supply your child with a device.

Sharing Best Practice

Over the next few weeks you may notice the Headteachers from other schools within Chancery Trust dropping into some live lessons. This will be agreed with the class teachers in advance and should not cause any disruption to learning.

Online Virtual Pantomime for all the family

We are extremely grateful that the Family and Friends of Pikemere have paid for a virtual pantomime to be enjoyed by the whole family. It is 'Robin Hood and His Socially Distanced Men!' and can be accessed through the links below. As well as securing a fun production for the children in our school this year, by purchasing it, we have also supported the actors, writers, directors and other creatives involved in the project during a time at which the industry has been hit particularly hard. Remember, with our unique password, we have unlimited access within our school and home learners from Monday 1st February until Friday 26th February 2021.

VIMEO (recommended): <https://vimeo.com/484064378>

OUR WEBSITE: <https://www.takeawayproductions.com/watch-now>

Our unique Password for each: Feb142RH

So sit back, relax and enjoy!!!

Resources for our families

Please look at the school website for resources to support the whole family. You will find them on the Learning from home tab on the home page. There are resources about keeping active from Stoke City Community Trust and Staffordshire and Stoke On Trent Together Active and School Games. There are ideas for non screen activities and keeping safe online and even a Star Count activity for the whole family.

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/dark-skies/star-count-2021/>

If you need support with anything please contact the office and we will hopefully be able to sign post you to the appropriate service.

Parent Online Forum

We would normally be conducting a parent survey at this time of the year, but we would like to try something different and combine this with our parent forum. If you think this is something you would like to be involved in then please let the office know as we would like to arrange our first online meeting before half term.

Adopt an animal

Two of our year 6 girls, Beatrice and Ella are organising an appeal to adopt an animal through the World Wildlife Fund. Here is their message:

'We are writing to inform you about the 'Adopt and Animal' scheme organised by the World Wildlife Fund. We are currently setting up a Go Fund me page to help save the many vulnerable animals around the world at risk of extinction. We need to raise at least £36 to adopt one animal for a year, but if we raise enough money we could adopt one animal per class. We hope that by adopting at least one animal, we are raising awareness of their plight to preserve them for future generations.'

As soon as the girls' go fund me page is live, we will let you know so you can donate.

Safeguarding

As we are all relying even more on technology to keep in touch through this pandemic, as well as using it for online lessons, here is some valuable advice from our safeguarding partners on how to keep your child safe online.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/coronavirus-parents-working-from-home/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<https://www.internetsociety.org/events/kids-the-internet-covid-19-how-to-keep-our-children-safe-online/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjZ7GyZDH7gIVAurtCh257ACMEAAAYASAAEgJsEvD BwE>

Tuesday 9th February, is Safer Internet Day with the theme 'Together for a safer internet'. The focus this year is on the reliability of the internet, fake news and can we trust what we read? The teachers are planning a variety of activities to raise awareness of staying safe online and we would like to encourage you to get involved with discussions with your children.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2021>

School Council

Our school council is continuing to meet virtually each week and recent work has been around developing content for the website. Watch out for the launch of their updated page soon.

EYFS Pre-school (Caterpillar and Sunflower classes)

Please visit the school website for a range of suggested weekly activities, teaching videos and story time sessions on our 'Caterpillar Learning' page (under the 'Learning at Home' tab) or 'Caterpillar and Sunflowers Storytime' page. We also look forward to seeing you at our daily storytime session on Microsoft Teams at 2.50pm.

Covid 19 Reminder

Can we please stress the importance of following the government guidance to self-isolate for the full 10 days if anyone in your family has been in close contact with a positive Covid 19 case, either within the school community or from outside. If you choose to get tested, regardless of a negative result, you still need to adhere to the full 10 days. This includes not going out to work, shopping or to exercise in public. We thank you for your continued support in helping us all to remain as safe as possible.

We wish you all a lovely half term and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Mrs S L Gohr