

**Head Teacher: Mr Matthew Kelly**



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Dear parents and carers,

I hope that you and your families and friends are fit and well.

I was talking to someone the other day and I started my sentence by saying, 'In normal times'. It struck me that the last time it was, 'normal times' is in fact getting on for nearly a year ago. It certainly does feel like Groundhog Day every day and I don't think anything feels like 'normal' anymore. The days seem to blend into one and the supposed light at the end of the tunnel seems to still be a long way away.

As a parent of two children myself, I know how difficult the balancing act of home-schooling and working at home and dealing with the worries of a global pandemic is for everyone. Therefore, please do not worry if you feel like you are banging your head on a brick wall with any home-schooling, I know that I am, GCSE chemistry and physics is not for me and I never want to read another Shakespearian play again, ever! This week we emailed out a home-learning questionnaire asking for your feedback on how you feel school is getting on with our home-learning provision. Thank you for all your comments, your feedback is so useful. It's good to know that we are pitching things in the right way for the children at home. You've also given us some great ideas on how we can improve things. Thank you.

I think it is only right that I give you some feedback about how we at school feel everyone is getting on at home. You have all been amazing! You have been thrown into the deep end literally, and I cannot sing the praises of everyone enough. The staff on a daily basis show me all the incredible things that are going on at home, and it keeps all of us going at school. It has been a tough few weeks in school, and personally the last few weeks have been the hardest for me mentally throughout the whole pandemic to date. The incredibly kind words of support from many of you have helped massively. Therefore, remember it is ok to have days where the children are making you tear your hair out and they, or you just do not understand what is going on with the home-learning and you feel like throwing the laptop out of the window. That's ok, just do what can do, give your child a hug, play a board game with them, read a book with them, curl up on the sofa with them and watch their favourite film, keep making them feel special. As hard as the pandemic is for adults, for children their world has been completely turned upside down. The most important thing as always is that they feel safe, cared for and loved. I understand that people may be worried that their child will come back to school far behind, and even further behind those children who are in school at the moment. This is not the case. Please do not worry. In September, all the children caught up quickly in school. When we finally have all the children back in school, we will be quickly ascertaining where the gaps are and putting a rapid catch up plan together to get the children up to speed. Coupled with this, we will focus on the children catching up with their friends socially and most importantly make sure that they have fun and smile a lot! The last thing that I or anyone wants in school is for home-learning to become a battleground or an intensely pressured situation. You are not teachers, your job is far more important and the best job in the world, you are mums and dads, so please do not worry about home-learning if it becomes too difficult. We are here to help. Be that with times tables, fronted adverbials and subordinate clauses, long division or who built the pyramids, the wonders of the solar system or how volcanoes are formed. If you want a chat, a cry or a virtual cup of tea discussing the complex dynamics of the relationships between the characters in Macbeth (my daughter's home-learning) just let me know. Remember, we are here to help and what you are doing is amazing, whether you believe it or not.

Next week is national children's mental health week. We know that the majority of learning at the moment is done via a device, therefore in order to have a break away from screens and linking in with mental health week we will be having a 'Feel Good Friday' day for our whole school community where there will be no live lessons but a whole host of other activities for you to undertake at home. Attached to this letter are a variety of different ideas for you to try at home throughout next week with your children. We will also be sending out our 'Feel Good Friday' timetable of suggested activities at the beginning of next week.

Remember you are all doing an amazing job and each day that we wake up we are closer to the end of this lockdown.

Thank you for all your support,

Have a fantastic weekend,

Take care and stay safe,

*M Kelly*

Mr Kelly

# Children's Mental Health Week 2021

## BE CREATIVE

- Go for a walk. Collect natural objects to come home and make a collage of your winter day.
- Make a new invention out of something old.
- Write a song about your experience of lockdown.
- Write a poem about winter or lockdown and illustrate it.
- Upcycle a clothing item
- Create a scene depicting a historical event using lego.

## BE INDEPENDENT

- Read a book or newspaper and write a review.
- Listen to an audio book – download for free on audible for kids.
- Store cupboard challenge – look at home in the cupboard; can you design a dish to feed a family? Then try making it!
- Practise drawing different objects or people in your home.
- Listen to a podcast.

## BE COLLABORATIVE

- Play a board game or have a game of cards with someone in your household.
- Make lunch with/for your family.
- Learn a new skill or craft from a family member.
- Ring someone you haven't spoken to in a while and ask them about how they are feeling and what they've been doing.
- Write a letter to someone special and post it.

## BE ASPIRATIONAL

- Pick up the phone and ring someone in your family or a friend and ask them about their career.
- Draw a picture of yourself in 10 years' time the way you want to be seen by others.
- Find a competition you can take part in; aspire to win it!
- Write a letter to someone you admire and post it.
- Listen to a TEDTalk from someone you aspire to be like.

## BE REFLECTIVE

- Write a Coronavirus diary/blog about your experience during lockdown.
- Create a mindful space in your bedroom.
- Go for a walk and consider nature, life, the ecosystems.
- Make a list of ten things you are grateful for and pin it to your wall or put them in a jar to remind you each day.
- Spend some time meditating.
- Lay down and listen to your favourite song.

## BE RESILIENT

- Make a plan for your day and stick to it.
- Commit to a day of healthy eating. Write up any recipes you find and share them with others.
- Get active and do a workout.
- Have a dance party for 45 minutes.
- Make up a new dance routine to your favourite song.
- Learn a poem by heart and perform it to your family.

## Feel Good Friday

On Friday as a whole school we will be having a day off from lessons. We will be taking part in lots of different activities and trying to stay away from zoom as much as possible (Think we all need a break)

A time table of suggested activities will be sent out next week via ClassDojo and email

