



Kidmore End CE Primary School

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15th May 2020



Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you have all had a safe and healthy week. I'm sorry that my Twitter activity has been a bit limited this week but as I'm sure you understand it has been rather busy following the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday. I hope you have all had the chance to read the letter from Anne Dellar, the CEO of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, sent this morning. We continue to work with ODST and Governors to make a full plan and risk assessment, and will keep in touch with all parents as the situation develops.

We are also aware that those year groups not included in the government's first wave of plans for wider opening of schools may be concerned about ongoing provision for their home learning, particularly as it is likely that all teaching staff will be needed to accommodate smaller groups in school. I'd like to reassure you that the current provision will continue in terms of what is available on the school website, and the World Tour topic will continue our journey all the way to July, whether in school or at home.

A small number of parents have asked about online lessons, and in particular live lessons via Zoom or a similar platform. We do intend to try and provide some further video content, as has been successful in the KS1 classes with story videos being shared by staff, but do not believe that live lessons are effective for the primary age group, where teaching relies on interaction and in the moment assessment of needs. Indeed we do not know of any other state primary school using Zoom/Teams etc. successfully for live teaching, although I'm sure there are examples.

There are a number of reasons for this decision, and they are not based on funding, as we know that our governors or KESA would support us if investment was needed. Two main factors are that our children have different circumstances - many will be sharing devices with siblings, or not have access to a suitable device at all, and depending on what is going on at home it's likely that for some conditions for learning won't be ideal. Our teachers also have varied circumstances, and whilst it wouldn't be appropriate to go into details, all are working from home, with access to few of their resources, some with caring responsibilities and/or health concerns, and some spending part of their working time in school delivering key worker provision.

There have been a number of security and safeguarding concerns raised, not only about Zoom but the use of digital platforms in general, so we have been cautious in our use and followed guidance from ODST to ensure use is appropriate. If we were in school and able to have training together, I'm sure our progress would have been quicker, although it's also true if we had months to plan our online learning offer it may well have looked different than the strategy planned in a very short space of time in March. We have revised and made additions, but have also tried to keep it simple and to capitalise on the great deal of positive feedback we have received.

When designing our home learning, particularly after Easter, I was mindful of a possible phased return of pupils, and especially the need to continue to provide learning for any children not in school. We will continue to follow government guidance and make use of the excellent resources such as White Rose Maths and BBC Bitesize as well as supplying our own activities for use at home and in school and continuing as far as possible the feedback and interaction via email between teachers, parents and pupils. This is going to be a challenge alongside being open to more pupils in school, but we can only promise to do the best we can, bearing in mind that we are all in the same storm, if not in exactly the same boat!

Children's Challenge – Virtual New York Marathon

We're not quite in North America yet on our world tour, but this will be the last virtual challenge for the moment so I thought we should take part! 117 staff and pupils took part on our busiest day on the journey to Cairo, so I hope you will enjoy this one.

On Wednesday 20th May the Virtual New York City Marathon and Half Marathon begins. All the Virtual Challenges to date have been run on an entire school basis. This event is different and pits Year Groups within a school against each other but crucially also against their peers at schools around the country.

The challenge is, over the course of one week (20th-26th May), for pupils in FS through to Y2 to complete, on average, a Half Marathon whilst Y3 to Y6 will take on the full Marathon distance. Every child is encouraged to participate to ensure the average distance per year group is as high as possible. The daily average needs to be 3km and 6km to complete the Half Marathon and Marathon respectively.

The average distance per pupil will form the basis of the rankings. The only adults that are allowed to submit their daily distance are the class teachers and teaching assistants. Families should adhere to Government guidelines on social distancing. Results and rankings will be published daily.

Families are reminded that they have access to Digimap software, if required, to calculate distance travelled: Username: RG49AU Password: blelks3017

The daily distance is submitted via a link on The Children's Challenge website. No pupil details have been shared with Children's challenge or Digimap and you do not have to enter personal details in the website. For more information please visit: <https://thechildrenschallenge.com/new-york-marathon> Good luck!

TT Rockstars Challenge

And here's another challenge for you. TT Rockstars got in touch with GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS and after some conversations they have created a new title - "the highest score achieved on 'Times Tables Rock Stars in one minute!'"

To make an Official Attempt, players need to record a video of themselves achieving their highest score in the Studio* and send it to support@mathscircle.com by 4th June 2020. More details are in the attached letter.

Home Learning

Class pages and the whole school page will be updated ready for the week ahead, and this week we are off to the enormous continent of Asia! Each week there are some 'finding out about the continent' activities, and then children can choose any country to find out more about. There are also some activities based on a particular country – this week India. We also have a lovely letter from Mrs Crouch about her time living in Japan. Activities are attached to this letter and on the Home Learning page.

Banners for our gates

We would love some new banners for the front and back entrances of our school, which celebrate all that is special and wonderful about our school family. Can you design a colourful banner, based on our values (thankfulness, hope, truth, courage, responsibility and friendship) and vision as expressed in John 13:34: *"love one another: just as I have loved you"*?

Thank you to those who have sent their ideas already – we'd love to see as many different ideas as possible. When we return to school our School Council will have a look and choose the ideas to be made up into a large banner.

A message from Thames Valley Police

During this period of COVID 19 lockdown children and young people are increasingly using social media. There are positive aspects to this but also challenges. TVP have launched a campaign which highlights some of the safeguarding issues that this increased use can bring. The key messages are as follows:

For children:

- Don't be afraid of coming forward and speaking to a parent, carer, guardian, teacher or other trusted adult.
- The Police are here to help and support you – you will not be in trouble.
- Know who you are talking to on-line. If something doesn't feel right – tell someone.

For parents:

- Trust your instinct for signs, you know your child better than anyone
- Have your children suddenly become very secretive?
- Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?
- Do they seem distracted
- Do they have sudden mood swings?
- Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media?
- Have open conversations with children about their internet usage.
- Use parental controls and seek guidance from the available free resource.

TVP recommends the website www.thinkuknow.co.uk – which links to advice for children at different age groups, parents/carers and professionals including teachers. There is a link to their home learning activities on the school website under STEM.

And finally...

Among many thank yous this week, I must mention Jacky Ward and Alice Walker from Wallingford School. Alice is a DT teacher and has been leading their production of protective face shields since the start of the crisis, including fundraising and delivering to a range of NHS and community sites. Jacky got in touch and asked if we would like some, and has delivered them this afternoon, along with her lovely daughter who is a former pupil. The Kidmore End family is strong and we are very, very grateful for it.

Have a lovely weekend.

With very best wishes,

Linda