



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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Friday 1st May, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that at the end of the sixth week of lockdown this finds you and your families well. This is the simple hope for each day really – isn't it? I would like to congratulate and thank all of the staff and pupils for returning after the Easter 'break' with such wonderful attitudes to our virtual learning via the school website over the past two weeks. The whole community has worked so hard under such extraordinary circumstances and, for that, we are eternally grateful to you. The governors are also continuing to support the school and governor meetings are taking place through virtual platforms - so I would like to also thank them for their work on the children's behalf.

Like many of you, I am eagerly awaiting to hear the outcome from the update from Downing Street on the restrictions that are in place across the country - which is due next week. We know that, at this present time, we remain on lockdown and, as a result, we know that the children are safer with you, as they are not having contact with people who may be unwell. However, if you need any support over the next few weeks (no matter how small!) PLEASE email the office on admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk. We may not necessarily have all of the answers but we can be with you and together we can talk through any issues or problems that you may be facing.

As you are aware, our fantastic staff team have been working hard to make sure we can continue to provide education for your children. I do hope that you have found our home learning tasks helpful and that you have enjoyed seeing your class teachers send a little message to the children! I think they have enjoyed making them for you! They really do miss the children desperately. As a reminder, our current approach is as follows:

- Class teachers are setting a range of tasks for your child to work through at home each day. This includes daily English, Maths and PE activities, and a selection of RE, Science, Art/DT and topic based lessons.
- All of this work can be found on the class pages of the school website, where you can also find a wealth of other online resources that may be useful during this time, e.g. suggested websites to support learning.
- We have tried to vary the planned activities so that there are lots of creative, physical and/or research learning opportunities that do not always necessarily involve a using PC, iPad, tablet or phone! Some tasks will be paper based, some will be online and some will be practical. This will help your child to receive a balanced learning programme.

We fully appreciate how difficult it for you during this time so, although we encourage all children to actively engage with these daily activities, we also stress that families should

only do what they can and that **staying safe is the key priority**. There are days when there just is not enough time for reading books, writing stories and working on mathematical skills (such as times tables). We are only too aware of this and totally understand, so please be kind to yourselves.

If this situation continues into the second half of the term, we will continue to set further work for our children via the school website. We have tried to keep everyone's workloads – both pupils learning at home and those in school – comparable, appropriate and realistic during this turbulent and challenging period. Please do not worry about your children falling behind with their learning. Be assured that absolutely everyone is in the same boat, and when things get back to normal, we will make sure we get everyone back on track.

Remember to give yourself some space during these busy and strange times. I know you are all, quite rightly, keeping the children at the centre of what you are doing but you also need to keep yourself well – both physically and mentally. I think you are doing amazingly well and when I clap on a Thursday evening with my neighbours, I am not only clapping for the heroic NHS, but also for all of the families that make up our phenomenal school community! Thank you for your efforts – what is key is that our children are safe and we are all protecting our valued NHS. Please also remember your teachers and support staff when you are clapping on a Thursday evening!

I, like all Headteachers across the country, do not have any firm knowledge about how the schools will return when they do. As soon as we do know, I will be in touch with you all to share our plans. We need to find the balance of getting the children ready to return, whilst not upsetting them during the next few weeks as they are settled in their 'new normal'. Schools remain closed for the foreseeable future and so I think it would be worth providing children with an understanding of this and letting them know that we will speak to them when we know what will be happening after that. This then, at least, supports their understanding of the coming weeks and will aid their transition back to school, when it happens. As always, we will continue to work together as a team to ensure the very best outcomes for our children.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support in these difficult times. We can only function as a team so, all of the teachers and staff thank you - because we are all in this together! Thank you for your supportive and encouraging emails! Please do continue to keep in touch and let us know how you are getting on. As I have said before, we are all playing our part and helping those very important workers by doing what the government has asked us to do and life WILL soon return to "normal"!

May God bless you and all of your families.

Keep safe, keep happy and keep well!

Richard Curry