



LANCHESTER E.P. (Cont.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Weekly Bulletin - Friday 3rd April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

***Look how much you've already managed to adapt to.
Look how resilient you've already been.
There's no 'right' way to respond to this because it's never, ever happened before.
Give yourself some credit.
There's no-one in the whole world who has this figured out yet.
So it's absolutely okay if you don't either.***

This is a very different letter I am sending today and it is actually very hard to write. There is so much I want to say but it is so hard to put into words! But here goes...

Firstly – thank you all so much for your immense positivity – you have been truly outstanding in such challenging circumstances.

We are all learning as we go along at the moment – life as we know it, has changed for the foreseeable future and I am sure we are all finding it a bit of a challenge. Whether you are a key worker, NHS frontline staff, stay at home parents/carers, parents who have been furloughed and suddenly finding too much time on your hands or parents who are supposed to be working from home whilst also home educating your child - it is all a huge challenge! We know that and totally understand. We are all finding it a challenge too - trust me!

However, what I can say is that we can all only do our best. I do not want any of you becoming concerned as you don't feel you are doing enough for your children. The important thing to remember is that you are there for them and what your children need more than anything at the moment, is to know they are loved and that you are there to comfort them when needed.

Our children are probably as unsure and scared as we are at the moment – they hear everything that is going on around them and will no doubt pick up on our anxiety and tension. Like us, they will never have experienced anything like this before. As a result, their behaviour will undoubtedly change – they could well become more challenging, display more anger or perhaps become more clingy to one or both parents. This is perfectly normal and understandable. What they need from you is love, patience and kindness. How they feel during this time, will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during these weeks is gone.

So, with that in mind, the teachers will not be setting any work for the next two weeks which are now officially the Easter holidays. Like you and your children, our teachers need a break to re-charge their batteries and time to learn to cope with this new lifestyle. However, we will still be setting a daily twitter challenge – these will be fun and active and just help to keep the wonderful community spirit alive during this difficult time. If you don't already, please follow us: @Lanchester EP. It is certainly worth doing!

My suggestion is that during the next two weeks, you bake cookies/cakes and paint pictures. Play board games and watch films. Start a book and read it together as a family. Snuggle under blankets and do nothing! Enjoy being with your children and families – I am sure in months and years to come we will look back at this time and wish that we had this time with them again.

However, equally, I am sure there are times when you are wondering how you are going to get through this time – we all are! All of a sudden, we are all cooped up together in the same house for hours at a time – it is hard and there is no escaping the fact! As someone who normally spends so little time in the house – I am finding it very hard – although I am sure my house has never been as clean and tidy as it is at the moment! As I keep saying, 'Behind every cloud there is a silver lining!'

Key Worker Children

Our school will remain open during the Easter holiday for children of key workers. However, as communicated before we closed, we can currently only accept children whose parents are both key workers or in the situation

maintain the health and safety of all those on site – both the children and the staff in charge. This decision has been made in consultation with the Local Authority and Chair of Governors due to the huge numbers of our parents who are key workers. It would just be impossible to be able to offer places to all children who have just one parent as a key worker. Also, it has been made quite clear by the government on a number of occasions, the safest place for all of us, is to stay at home.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all those key workers whose children have been attending school. Your children are a credit to you all and have been wonderful! Thank you also for keeping in close contact with me and letting me know which days they will be attending – that is a huge help to me when organising the staffing and lunches – thank you very much!

Free School Meals

We have had an increased number of emails from parents asking whether they are eligible for the Free School Meals Voucher Scheme which has been launched by the government this week.

If your child is eligible for free school meals, you will have received an email from us this week. Families who are eligible for Free School Meals undergo a check which is based on their annual household income. If you think you might be eligible for this (if your annual household income is below £7,400) please email myself or the school office with your National Insurance Number and Date of Birth and we can ask the Local Authority to carry out a check.

There is some confusion around the universal free school meals scheme which is for all children who are in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 regardless of their household income. When these children are in school, they do receive a free school meal, even though their parents might in fact be millionaires! These children are not eligible for the voucher scheme. I do hope that helps to clarify things for you all.

eSchools Discussions and Blogs

Can I just ask all parents to monitor their children's comments on the blogs and discussion pages please? Obviously we need to be very aware of online safety and the children may just need to be reminded that whatever they write can be seen by everyone in their class – and by their teacher – and by their headteacher too! Thank you.

Thank You

Finally, I would like to say a huge thanks again to the amazing staff team who continually teach, educate, entertain and care for us. I have to say that they have all surpassed themselves during these last two weeks – whether it has been telling stories, videoing phonics lessons, setting work, replying to emails, contributing to the discussion forums, posting on twitter, or just being there for the children and parents – our staff have, once again, just been superb!

Thank you to all parents and carers. You have been amazing with your wonderful efforts to home educate your children. I think we will either have a new generation of budding teachers or a new generation of parents who are in awe of teachers who manage to get a class full of children to do exactly what they want, when they want!

Last but not least, thank you to the children who have had to learn new routines, timetables, ways of learning and who are continually just learning to adjust. You have been amazing and it has been so lovely to see so many photos of you and your work online! Keep it coming....

I hope you all have an enjoyable Easter break – I am sure it will be very different to the one you had planned – but enjoy it all the same. I shall look forward to seeing you on twitter and we shall be back to 'home-school' on Monday 20th April for more action-packed work and activities.

Keep safe. Keep smiling. Stay positive. Stay at home. Be patient. Be appreciative.

By the way – look out for a very special Davis Daily Update tonight – it epitomises our brilliant staff team!

With very best wishes to you all,

Mrs Jane Davis