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Halfpenny Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Newsletter

Friday 3rd April 2020

We have come to the end of another strange week. Though it is sad to see an empty school, the staff have found it uplifting to speak to so many parents and children! We are glad you are all keeping safe in this worrying time. At this point, as we are about to start the Easter break, we should be sharing so many wonderful things that have taken place in school – I am looking forward to getting back into school so we can celebrate all the fantastic things we do each day!

Free School Meals Vouchers

As a Trust, we are working hard to make sure that those families who are in receipt of Free School Meals continue to benefit from this during this period of self-isolation. All eligible parents should have received an email containing £15 vouchers (per week) that can be exchanged for food at Morrison's supermarket. If you feel you should have received these vouchers and have yet to do so, please contact us on admin@halfpenny.patrust.org.uk. This is something that is continuing over the Easter break.

Learning Packs

As you have seen in a previous correspondence, the new learning packs are available on our school website. We hope that you can use these resources and complete the work in the workbooks we have provided. If you are struggling to access or use the resources please contact us through the admin email address. I must stress that over the Easter period, there is no expectation at all to complete the work as this is your 'holiday' period. It maybe that you use these resources as part of your daily routine but, please make sure you also enjoy family time over this holiday period.

Pastoral Telephone Calls

Even over the Easter break, staff are eager to speak to the children to see what they are up to. You may receive a call over the next two weeks from your child's class teacher. If you receive one of these calls, please do not be concerned as these are of a pastoral nature. If your child wants to a quick chat to the adult calling them - by all means, put them on the phone!

Trust Communication

Please see the link below from our latest Trust communication regarding Corona virus.

<https://halfpenny.patrust.org.uk/coronavirus-update/>

Teaching is the most brilliant profession but it is hard. Parenting is also very hard. Put the two together, combine in siblings and not being able to leave the house and it all gets so much harder. So here are a few tips and comments which may or may not help – they are not meant to be patronising in any way:

Firstly, we genuinely sympathise with all of the difficulties that you may face as a parent during this challenging time. You may be working, you may be delivering online content yourself, you may have younger children, or a combination of all of these factors. Of course, you and other family members may also be ill. We really do understand.

This is not home schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency affecting the whole world. Let's keep perspective. Home schooling is a choice, where you consider, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. The situation that we all find ourselves in is not home schooling.

Do the best you can, try to get a routine in the day and go for 'little and often' rather than giving up.

Education staff find home learning hard too! It is not the same teaching your own children.

Don't try and completely fill a child's day, they need down time as do you; primary aged pupils all need time to play.

Don't set yourselves up to 'fail' over time with timetables which are too lengthy (beyond the school day) or that your child might get bored with!

Any sort of exercise or activity during the day will help with not just physical health, but everyone's mental health too.

Keep expectations realistic. You know your child best and whether it is working little and often, or doing more of the academic tasks in the morning rather than later in the day; choose a strategy that works for all of you and also works around your work patterns.

This could also be an opportunity to engage in so many other areas of life skills that don't involve always sitting in front of a screen. Many families will now be spending more time together in each other's company. Let's treasure and make the most of that time. Share the duties – cooking, tidying – skills for life. Enjoy some family time - life is busy and we can use this time to 're-connect' with our families.

Finally, you are doing enough. You are loving your children and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't let this be something that stresses you. In these unprecedented times, all any of us can do is our best and please be reassured that you have our support and guidance when you need it.

Thank you.

Mr James Parkinson – Head of School