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School Closure Weekly Update

Friday 24th April 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you so much for your continued support as we all navigate our way through the period of school closure. As we continue on this journey there will, I'm sure, be new issues to sort out. We will address whatever comes our way and continue to give you whatever remote support we can until normal service resumes.

Everyone will be facing their own challenges at this time and will be coping with different aspects of lockdown in different ways. Please try to ensure that addressing the children's schoolwork doesn't become an additional insurmountable burden for you all. As I have said before, no one is expecting you to recreate the same routines or support structures that we have in school – all you can do is your best effort. Some of you may be facing the challenge that your child is finding being at home difficult and is reluctant to engage with the work that has been set. If this is the case, try the following:

- Start small – Set an expectation for how much time you expect your child to engage in school work each day – this may be just an hour or half an hour at first to get them into improved habits.
- Involve the children in choosing the activities they are going to work on.
- Praise the children's effort at engaging with the task. Don't make a point of picking up on all the errors in a piece of work as that can be demoralising. Instead pick out some things they have done well and find productive ways to work on errors next time.
- Decide together what your child can do once work is completed.
- If they become agitated about a task, leave it for a while and then come back to it once they are feeling better placed to tackle it. Don't let it become a battle.

Message for the Children...

Hi everyone,

I hope that you have all had a good week and are getting back into the swing of things with your school work. I'm sure that you would all much rather be outside in the sunshine (me too) but try to get back into good routines.

Have any of you been out clapping on Thursday nights for the NHS and all the amazing key workers? I have been out banging a saucepan with a wooden spoon! My road has been very busy with my neighbours clapping and cheering, we even had someone playing 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' on a trumpet. I'm wondering what they are going to play next week. I'll let you know.

I'm really proud of how well you are all doing. I know that these are tricky times but you are all being wonderful. Have a look at the photos on the website to see some of the things that you have been up to. It makes me happy to know that you are keeping yourselves busy and being creative with your time. We're going to have lots of news to tell each other when we come back to school.

Smiles to you all

Miss Talbot

- It might be helpful to set aside the same time each day to work on school tasks – children often like routines as this gives them a sense of stability. However for some families, routines might be difficult to achieve due to work commitments. No one approach is any better than any other – this is about what works best for you as a family.
- Try to ensure that something is completed every day. Build on this during each subsequent day.

Some parents might be finding that the children are getting through their work quickly and are after more tasks to be set. If this is the case, consider whether the children have applied their best effort to a task or whether they have simply done enough to be able to move onto the next task. If this is the case you might want to talk through the task before they start and help them to make a list of things to be included, ensuring that they delve a little deeper and include as much detail as they can.

For those that do want additional tasks, see the information below on other resources that will be uploaded to the school website on Monday or have a go at our weekly challenge.

I know that some parents may be worried that their children might ‘fall behind’ during this time – please be assured that this period of disruption will not have a life long lasting impact on your child’s learning. All children are in the same boat and when we return to school, adjustments will be made to our curriculum and programmes of study to take into account the period of school closure. Please don’t feel guilty or worried about what you are doing at home – every little helps and you are all doing an amazing job.

Above all else, it is important that at this difficult time, the children feel safe, happy and fulfilled. Tasks that you complete together as a family such as a daily walk, baking, playing a board game or having fun in the garden are really important so please don’t undervalue these. Build time into your week to spend time together doing these sorts of activity. It’s the reassurance and love that you give your children that will help them develop the resilience and motivation to deal with everything this situation is throwing at us.

Unexpected Adventure Trails and Year Group Newsletters

The current ‘Unexpected Adventure Trails’ have been live on the school website since Monday and will last until new trails are set on Monday 4th May. To access these, please click on ‘Home Learning – School Closure 2020’ which can be accessed from the main menu. We have set up year group specific pages that can be accessed from this page or from the School Closure tab. On each year group page, you will also find help sheets which will provide additional information to help your children complete the tasks set.

The trail tasks should be completed in the children’s work books. Don’t forget to keep up with a daily diet of Mathematics, spelling and phonics practice, daily reading and number facts / times tables practice. In addition to the tasks set by the teacher, Mathematics contains a wealth of games including a ‘Multiverse’ section for times tables practice. This is the perfect time to build in lots of additional times table practice – this is such an important skill which helps with many aspects of maths. Gradually try to pick up the speed of recall and move on to link to inverses e.g. that they know $6 \times 4 = 24$ and that $24 \div 6 = 4$. There are also additional learning games and activities available on Purple Mash.

We hope that the children enjoyed reading the Year Group newsletters that the teachers have put together. They contain news, information about topics and further links that will be helpful in completing Adventure Trail tasks.

Help with Mathletics

I hope that everyone has seen the ParentMail sent by Mrs Partridge on Wednesday regarding Mathletics. Following an amendment made in Mathletics to enable children to have full access to the platform without first completing all the tasks set, we were made aware that some children were therefore not able to see the tasks assigned by their teachers this week.

To rectify this, yesterday morning, the teachers reassigned all tasks, except the first two. A new task will be released each day rather than a group of tasks being assigned all at the same time. This will enable your child to complete the daily task set and then go on to explore the rest of the platform. Any daily task not completed will remain on the system until completed so they don't have to be worked on each day. However, children will be unable to access the games section, until assigned tasks have been completed.

We have placed an information sheet onto the School Closure page of the website which shows parents how to access the help guides on Mathletics which will explain how to approach the activities set.

Some children may have previous Mathletics homework tasks assigned that were not completed prior to school closure. If parents would like these tasks removed to enable your child to focus specifically on the school closure tasks, please email your class teacher using the year group email.

Online Resources – New Links on the School Website as of Monday 27th April

On Monday, a new section of our website will go live. This will include information, arranged by subject, on different websites and apps that you might find useful to keep your children busy at home. It also includes information on sites that can support children with SEN. To find these resource links, click on the 'Home Learning – School Closure 2020' tab from the main menu and then the 'Online Activities' tab. Some of these activities would be useful to try when children have completed the tasks set on their Adventure Trails.

BBC Bitesize has produced a daily series of online lessons for each year group, covering a range of subjects and topics. From Monday to Friday, you'll be able to watch Bitesize Daily on the BBC Red Button from 9am to 11am. Each 20-minute lesson will cover a different age group from ages five to 14, and will be brought to you by experts, teachers and some very familiar faces from the world of TV, sport and beyond. IPlayer can be used to catch up on any programmes that have already been transmitted.

As every school's curriculum is different, you will find that the lessons may not match the topics being studied by your child – none the less, they would be worth engaging with if your child has completed all the tasks set on their Adventure Trail grid.

To access the website, follow this link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

You might also want to tune into 'Home School Histories' on Radio Four. These are fun history lessons for all the family, presented by 'Horrible Histories' Greg Jenner. Full of facts and jokes, the series brings to life a broad range of historical topics, many linked to the school curriculum.

You can download the programmes from the following website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000hmf>

Children Attending School during Closure

Please remember that key workers are asked to book places for the following week by contacting schoolclosure@godinton.kent.sch.uk by 12 p.m. (midday) on a Friday. Mrs Partridge is managing these arrangements and will confirm bookings with parents. Thank you to everyone for all their cooperation with the arrangements that we have in place – it's helped the system to run smoothly.

Please can we remind parents, that if they are working from home, then their children should remain with them.

We have noticed that some children have had very chapped hands from all their hand washing. Parents may put some hand cream in their children's bag to bring to school if they have sore hands. Please show them how to apply this sparingly but effectively and remind them that it cannot be shared with anyone else. The children will be asked to wash their hands throughout the day and are reminded that they should ensure that they dry them thoroughly with the paper towels provided.

Look out in the Godinton Gazette next week for some photos and reports on what life has been like for those attending school during the closure period.

Free School Meals

If any families in receipt of benefit related free school meals have had difficulty in accessing or redeeming their e-vouchers, please contact our School Business Manager, Mrs Williams who will be happy to assist. There have been further difficulties with the system but we are doing all we can to ensure that vouchers arrive on time. Please note that Aldi has now been added to the list of supermarkets where vouchers can be redeemed.

If any family believes that they might be entitled to benefits related free school meals, please look at the criteria by following the link below and should it relate to you, please contact the school office. Should your family circumstances change at any point, the school office will be happy to help you access any entitlement to free school meals.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

The Government has recently updated the list of those who are eligible for assistance with free school meals during the period of school closure to include: children of Zambrano carers, children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, children of families receiving support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction

These groups are also subject to a maximum household earnings threshold of £7,400 per annum.

As well as to children of a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This group is not subject to any maximum household earnings threshold.

This extension is temporarily in place due to the current unique circumstances. It covers both children who are attending school and children who are at home. Further guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

Home Learning Photos for Website

Please have a look at the 'Children' section of the website for some lovely photos of our Upper and Middle School children taking part in a wide range of spring activities over the Easter holiday. You have been busy making, baking, gardening, and even delivering Easter eggs to houses on the estate displaying rainbows in the window. Thank you to everyone who has sent a photo in.

If you have any photos of your Lower School or Middle School child completing last week's challenge activity on 'Imagination' or this week's challenge on 'Time', please send them to homelearning@godinton.kent.sch.uk by Friday 1st May. In order to stand the best chance of your child's picture making it to the website, please ensure that the image is of good quality and let us know that you give permission for it to be uploaded to the website. I will also be including some of the photos in school newsletters.

Safeguarding and Online Safety

Please remember that we have updated the school website to include helpful links for parents on supporting their child's online activity. These can be found on the Safeguarding during School Closure page of the website, which can be reached from the safeguarding tab. Here you can also find our updated Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy, details of what to do if you are worried about a child and contact numbers for anyone worried about domestic abuse.

If anyone has any concerns about a child, the safeguarding team at Godinton (Miss Talbot, Mrs Stein and Mrs McGibney) can be contacted on pupilwelfare@godinton.kent.sch.uk

Contacting the School

If you need to get in touch with the school office during the closure period, you can call 01233 621616 between 8.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Monday to Friday or email office@godinton.kent.sch.uk or headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk

In the event of an emergency, you can also contact emergency@godinton.kent.sch.uk and for safeguarding concerns please contact pupilwelfare@godinton.kent.sch.uk

Year group emails, for example year4parent@godinton.kent.sch.uk, can be used by parents to contact staff regarding any aspect of home learning. These accounts are checked Monday to Friday during school

Latest Government Guidance and Useful Resources

Please find attached to this ParentMail, a copy of two fliers from Ashford Borough Council – 'Ash 4 You' – which contains details of services being provided by Ashford Volunteer Centre during the lockdown period. The first leaflet asks for volunteers to help out in the Ashford area, doing essential shopping, delivering medication or being a caring voice at the end of the phone for vulnerable people. The second asks whether you or anyone you know is in need of help during this period and who to contact for assistance.

The latest Government guidance on Coronavirus can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Don't forget to adhere to the latest Government advice and remember to follow self-isolating guidance in the event of any symptoms of COVID-19.

Weekly Challenge...

Why not join in with this week's 'Weekly Challenge'. This is something that the children could work on independently or you could work on as a family.

This week's challenge is all about: **TIME**

Perhaps you could...

- Make your own clock with moveable hands and practice telling the time.
- Make a sundial in the back garden and use this to tell the time.
- Complete some time challenges – how many goals can you score in ten minutes, how many Lego bricks can you join together in 5 minutes? How many words can you find in a word search in 10 minutes?
- Find out about or make something connected with a particular time in history. If you could travel back or forward in time where would you travel to?
- Make a time capsule to capture the time that we find ourselves in and bury it in your back garden. What would you put in it? If you haven't got a garden, draw the things that you would put into your time capsule and explain why you have included them.

I'm sure that you can use your imagination to be really creative!

Wellbeing News...

It's important to look after our mental health during this time especially as the measures in place to keep us safe may limit our usual actions to respond to stress. Below is the link to the Kent and Medway NHS Mental Health Needs Bulletin which contains a list of resources to support parents and children during the pandemic. There are also resources to support learning at home as well as to help parents and carers to look after their own wellbeing. https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/106687/Covid-19-CCG-Bulletin-Children-and-Young-People-April-2020.pdf

Surviving Lockdown! Thoughts from FLO.....

We've done it! We're approaching our 6th week of Lockdown, which means we have successfully changed our daily routines, the way we think, act and behave and even our ways of shopping. (Who would have thought it?)

So are we half way through? Well no one really knows, but if we've managed this amount of time, then we can push a little further. I read this recently....

"The body heals through PLAY, the mind heals through LAUGHTER and the spirit heals through JOY"

If that's true, is there any chance that we could add more time to relax and play games or music, to deliberately laugh more at ridiculous or funny moments or to heal our feelings of loss by reflecting on joyful memories new and old. Better still start an online Gratitude Rant, get others to post something they want to shout out (It's got to be positive!!)

Final thoughts...watch out for the **BLAME CYCLE**..... "It's your fault...why didn't you.....if only you"..... Instead of getting frustrated at the Lockdown and those you are living with, do the following:

- **STAY ACTIVE!**
- **SPEND MORE TIME ENJOYING NATURE!**
- **CELEBRATE WHAT'S GOOD!**

Now pass it on.

Have a good week everyone. Take care and stay safe.

Kind Regards

Jill Talbot

Headteacher