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Parent/Carer Update

16.4.2020

To all Parents/Carers,

We are officially approaching the end of the Easter Holidays (even though every day feels remarkably similar!) so I hope you and your family are all ok and have had some time to enjoy the sun. Quite a bit to squeeze into today's update so here goes...

Mental Health

As a continuation of the lockdown measures which are currently in place looks likely, a focus on the mental health of children and all adults is stronger than ever. As a school it is something we have always tried to emphasise equally alongside the curriculum and our partnership with [Bridge the Gap](#), who have been amazing since we first started working together, has really allowed us to put some proper support and provision in place. We contacted them last week and asked if they had anything else they could offer to Markeaton families. They have since responded and we have signed up for two webinars they are hosting in the next few weeks. We have subsidised the cost so it is free to sign up. There are only 100 places available so it is first come first served. Here is the invitation from Jen at Bridge the Gap:

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Apr 22, 2020 08:00 PM London

Topic: 'Supporting an Anxious Child' - Markeaton Primary

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2JTvD0iZR--fr3C4ktSPw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Some other useful resources we have found to support mental health include:

- Derbyshire Mental Health helpline. Call 0300 790 0596 between the hours of 9am and midnight, seven days a week.
- Meditation and relaxation activities...<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga> and <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>

We have also sourced some websites to support children with SEND. There are probably hundreds more out there but these are quite good:

- National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents', young people and staff:
[https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-advice.aspx](https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx)

- Mencap - Easy Read guide to Coronavirus:

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/202003/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20SS2.pdf>

- The Autism Education – A social story about coronavirus that has a good level of specificity about the effects of social distancing e.g. not being able to go to favourite places.

<https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

- Information for those struggling with OCD

<https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/>

- General information for young people about managing their mental health

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

- Information for those with sensory difficulties who struggle with handwashing

<https://www.sensoryintegration.org.uk/News/8821506>

Free School Meals

After overcoming a huge national backlog, it appears Free School Meal vouchers are being emailed to parents/carers who qualify. Well done Mrs Gray in the office for sticking with it and making sure our families don't miss out.

School video:

We are currently in the process of putting a short video together from the school. I don't want to spoil the surprise but it should be available soon!

Home Learning:

New two week grids will be available for all classes next week and you will find them on the website under 'Our Learning' then click on your child's year group. At the same time, Miss Hurst in the office will continue to send her handy links and resources twice a week in case you run out of things to do!!

And finally...

Next Friday (24th April), if you can, we are inviting families to drop off an item of food at school (social distancing measures in place of course!) – a bit like on the last day before we closed. It is well documented in the news that foodbanks are some family's only source of food so we are going to do another delivery towards the end of the month. At the same time, we would like children to drop off a letter written to residents of local care homes. I have contacted Abbeydale on Duffield Rd and they are happy to be involved; with some residents already agreeing to write back. We feel this would be a good way to reach out to the more vulnerable members of the community and build some great relationships – plus practise a bit of writing!! Just pop your letter in an envelope with your name and class on the front and they will be collected and handed out by the manager. All letters will be stored securely in school for a week so that any risk of the virus being passed on will have gone. I would propose that your one bit of permitted exercise a day (as per the government guidelines), next Friday, could be a walk to school to do these tasks. Like I said, all social distance measures will be in place and we will provide anti-bacterial gel if you need it.

I think that is it for now, I hope you are all well and continue to enjoy this fine weather.

Take care and best wishes,

Mr I. Johnson