

Emmbrook Junior School Newsletter

Friday 27th March, 2020

In this Edition:

- A letter from Miss Scales
- Key Hub Club News
- Zoom assemblies, lessons and check-ins
- Useful contacts
- Some useful online educational resources



A letter from Miss Scales...

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a week! I hope you are all well and that despite the current situation we all find ourselves in, you are finding things to smile and laugh about each day. I understand that you may well be feeling overwhelmed and under pressure by the thought of having to keep your child's education going during the lockdown – all whilst trying to battle working from home.

Remember:

- There is no academic emergency this week, so do not feel guilt ridden if you haven't set up a home-school or managed to persuade your child to sit down and do any work. Our country is in crisis and we are all feeling anxious and tired. It is unlikely that we will get the best out of our children if we feel like this, so go with the flow and encourage them but do not worry if it doesn't go to plan.
- It is not possible to facilitate hours and hours of daily home learning with a primary aged child AND work from home at the same time. You can certainly set up activities where your child learns, and encourage independent study but you also have to focus on your job and on your mental health. We are not superheroes!
- Please accept that you are doing enough. You are loving your children, spending time with them and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for everyone's mental health and well-being.

Yesterday was my first day working from home whilst looking after my two young children and by the evening, I already felt like I had lost control! The Joe Wicks workout left me in a world of pain whilst the kids wandered off half way through after insulting the way I do press ups. Once I had recovered from 'PE', I managed to deliver a 15-minute Maths lesson and felt quite smug. However, when I tried to do some spelling with a now reluctant India (my 7-year-old daughter), my rambunctious 4-year-old Isaac proceeded to knock a full cup of juice all over India's work book. (She was delighted as it meant a lucky escape from home-learning for her!) My video conference call with Mr Theobald and Miss Barnes took place with a wriggly little boy on my lap and regular interruptions. During the afternoon, I tried to focus on some admin for school with 'American Pie' being blasted out on repeat by 'Alexa' which did not aid my concentration. Isaac then tripped over my laptop cable and promptly threw an epic tantrum because he landed on the Duplo tower he just spent ages creating and it was ruined FOREVER. By the evening, I was seriously considering teaching India fractions using the bottle of wine method that's gone viral on Facebook! (If you have seen it, you will understand my temptation!) Today however, I think I will not put myself under so much pressure and we will get out in the garden together and then share some stories. This is HARD and I've taught primary aged children for 18 years! I hope that reassures you we are all in this together.

FAQ: School has sent home lots of work and all sorts of suggested activities. How are we supposed to get through it all and will my child fall behind if we do not complete it all?!

You're not so don't try! The class teachers have spent a lot of time planning and gathering things to send home as they wanted to ensure there was a range of activities for the children to access if their family circumstances allow it. BUT it's not a competition or a race. A lot of the work in the learning pack is revision and reminder work. Once school reopens, your child will cover a lot of this again, multiple times. Do as much as you can – when you can. We will also send you suggestions of other activities or online resources to try and host some 'live' lessons online. Try them if you able to, don't worry if you don't.

Stay safe and keep well. We're here at the end of a phone or email if you need us.

Key Hub Club News

A huge thank you to all of our staff for the incredible amount of work that went into closing the school and launching our Key Hub Club. Another thank-you goes to those members of staff who came into work this week to look after the children who attended, to man the office and to look after the site. The admin team deserves a special mention for all of the paperwork behind the scenes. The team work displayed by everyone in school has been truly wonderful. The children all had big smiles on their faces as they got involved in woodland activities, PE, Art, Writing, Lego and Maths. Parents – thank you so much for all your supportive and grateful emails. There have been too many to respond to personally, but each and every one has been read and appreciated.

Due to the lockdown and increased pressure from the government for children to be kept at home if possible, our numbers had dwindled to zero by today. However, we are on standby to reopen again should Key Worker parents have no choice but to send their children into school. We would appreciate knowing by 3pm the day before so that we can assign staff and open up the school.

Zoom!

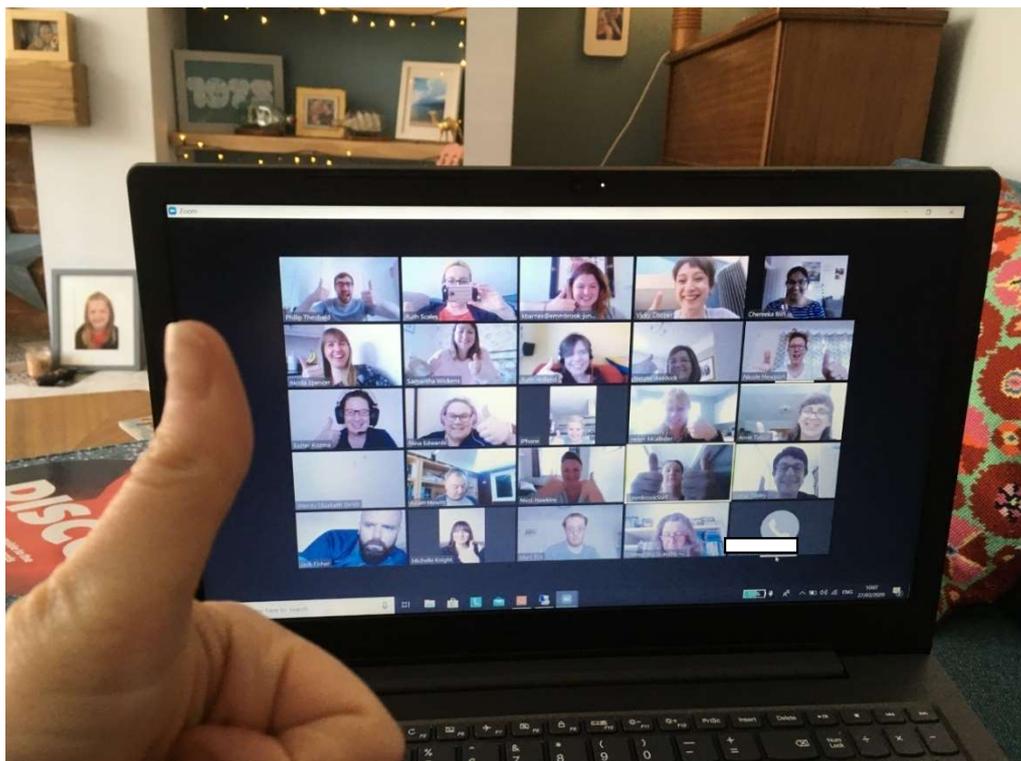
One positive to come out of all of this is that the staff of Emmbrook Junior School are becoming more tech savvy and have been exploring ways to make face to face contact with our children and families. After Easter, our teachers will start to use a video conferencing app called 'Zoom' to deliver some weekly Maths and English lessons to each year group, should school remain closed.

We would love parents to download the free 'Zoom' app onto their device or go straight to the Zoom website. <http://www.zoom.us> (You can sign up for free using your email address.) Once you have signed up, you or your child will be able to 'join a meeting' which basically means take part in a secure video chat with a group of other children and staff. **Full instructions of how to use Zoom will follow early next week.**

To get us started next week, we will attempt to hold a whole school assembly at **10:15am on Tuesday 31st March via Zoom**. Around fifteen minutes before the assembly starts, we will email you all the meeting code and a password that you will need to enter in order to join the meeting. We hope to see as many of you 'there' as possible! The teachers will then set up smaller 'meetings' with their classes just to touch base for a chat. An email invite to this class meeting will follow later next week.

In the meantime, why not let your children try out Zoom to hold virtual playdates with their friends?

A staff meeting from my lounge. Say cheese!



Staying in touch

Please do not hesitate to get in contact with any queries, worries or to share home learning.

Mrs. Claire Freeman - admin@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Miss Ruth Scales - rscales@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Mr. Philip Theobald - ptheobald@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Miss Kathryn Barnes - kbarnes@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

We will monitor these emails DAILY and will get back to you as soon as we possibly can either by email or by phone if you would prefer.

From next week, you will be able to contact the class teachers using the following email addresses. The teachers will check these regularly and will respond as soon as they are able to. When you email, please put the name of the teacher as the subject line so that it gets read by the appropriate person.

Year 3 (Mr Fox and Mrs. Hatherley) – year3@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Year 4 (Ms Biln and Mrs. Tinson) – year4@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Year 5 (Mr Hewitt, Mrs. McAllister and Miss Wickens) – year5@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

Year 6 (Mr Theobald, Miss Barnes and Mrs Preston) – year6@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

We plan to send home Parents Evening Reports as planned next week despite the fact that our face to face meetings have had to be cancelled. Please contact the class teacher should you have any further queries about your child's progress. Watch out for some lovely emails for your children from their teachers at some point, too!

Good to know...

Here's what various celebrities are offering you and your children for free daily to help with their education while schools are closed:

9.00am - PE with Joe Wicks

https://youtu.be/6v-a_dpwhro (Attempt this at your peril!)

10.00am - Maths with Carol Vorderman

www.themathsfactor.com

11.00am - English with David Walliams

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>

12.00pm - Lunch (cooking with Jamie Oliver)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=eJLA2RIZNq4&list=PLcpoB2VESJme7ISxXEcXyVtFPsMI78lcl>

1.00pm - Music with Myleene Klass

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQh2wgJ5tOrixYBn6jFXsXQ>

1.30pm - Dance with Darcey Bussell

<https://twitter.com/diversedance.../status/1241098264373592065>

2.00pm - History with Dan Snow (free for 30-days)

<https://tv.historyhit.com/signup/package>

4.00pm - Home Economics with Theo Michaels (Mon/Wed/Fri)

<https://www.instagram.com/theocooks>

Also...

- Learn beginner's British Sign Language by searching for Natasha Lamb on You Tube.
- Make a 'Be Kind' rainbow to display on one of your front windows for other children to spot if they walk by!

Have a safe and happy weekend from all of us at EJS!

