

# Emmbrook Junior School Newsletter

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020

## In this Edition:

- A letter from Miss Scales
- Goodbye and Good Luck
- Please take part in our Parent Survey
- Key Hub Club Update and Holiday Club
- Zoom sessions and online safety
- Hall of Fame
- Ideas for Home Learning
- Useful contacts

## In your inbox this week:

- A letter to each class from their teacher
- Spring Term Progress Report (and email explaining more about this)
- Zoom safeguarding and etiquette agreement



## A letter from Miss Scales...

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are keeping well and that you are gradually adapting to the new routines and regulations that Covid-19 has brought to all of our lives.

### Don't forget:

- Please do not put pressure on yourself to replicate a school timetable at home. They are your children and not your pupils; they are at home and not at school. It *is* not and *should* not be the same thing.
- If there is a learning task that you or your child is unsure of or getting frustrated with, then move on, take a break or do something else instead. Little and often is the key! Force nothing – it isn't worth the fall-out.
- It is for you as a family to choose from the work available in the learning packs and from the wide array of ideas being shared online and on social media to help keep your child's mind active and to encourage learning.
- Nobody will judge anyone on how much work has been done. Many of you have more than enough to worry about at the moment without the added pressure of feeling guilty that you should be doing more to support your child's education at home. Just do what you can, when you can.

I saw a quotation posted on social media recently that really resonated with me and that I found quite thought provoking. **"In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to."**

We know that many of your children love a good ol' philosophical debate(!) so why not discuss this statement with them over dinner one evening and see if you can pull out some positives from this strange and uncertain time.

In my family, we are trying hard to embrace the opportunities that this forced confinement and an abundance of 'family time' is offering us! Don't get me wrong, it's still incredibly hard to juggle the constant demands of two small but mighty children alongside our daily work challenges – all whilst maintaining a harmonious household, not drinking ALL the stock-piled wine or cracking open the Easter eggs prematurely. However, we are taking a more leisurely, pragmatic approach to things this week. (I am ashamed to say that Joe Wicks has well and truly fallen off my schedule – but hey-ho, everyone has a nemesis!)

**Exciting news** - our new Head Teacher, Mr Usher, joins us straight after the Easter Holidays! I spoke to him earlier this week and he is really looking forward to taking over the headship of our school. It's certainly not the way he expected to start his new job but he is very committed to helping support our staff and families during the extended period of school closure. I am sure you will join us in welcoming him to the Emmbrook community.

This therefore means that my term of Acting Headship has come to a rather dramatic end! I told the staff recently that the one thing that – prior to now - has kept me up at night was worrying about what to do if it snowed this term and I needed to close the school! Hmmm... Little did I know what lay ahead for us! Seriously though, it has been a fantastic experience and I have thoroughly enjoyed the term. Thank you to everyone – children, staff, governors and parents - for helping turn a daunting prospect into a wonderful opportunity. Your support has been incredible.

## Happy Easter!

## Goodbye and Good Luck!

It is always hard to wave goodbye to members of staff. Regrettably, Miss Wickens will be leaving us at the end of the spring term. She has been offered a great opportunity to become a full-time SENCO and Senior Leader at a primary school in West Berkshire. I am sure you will join me in congratulating her on her promotion. Miss Wickens will be sadly missed, particularly by the children she has taught over the years. After Easter, Year 5 Maple will continue to be taught by Mrs. McAllister and she will be joined by Mrs. Foxley. Mrs. Foxley is well known to all of the children as she has regularly taught classes across the school for many years.

We also have to say goodbye to Miss Garnham, who is one of our teaching assistants in our Hearing Resource Base. Miss Garnham has predominantly supported children in Year 5. The boys she has worked with will miss her as will all of us. Miss Garnham plans to study for her British Sign Language qualification. We wish her all the best for the future.

## Please take part in our Parent Survey!

If you haven't done so already, PLEASE take part in our short, online Parent Survey. Your feedback is immensely important to us, particularly because we have a new Head Teacher starting with us. The results of the survey will help Mr. Usher to work with us on prioritising our next school improvement steps and to celebrate what we do well. It only takes a few minutes to complete. At least one response from every family would give us the most balanced view. Both parents can complete the survey. Just type this code into your web browser on any device and it will take you straight there. Thank you!

**Bit.ly/32SBSFK**

### Key Hub Club

Our Key Hub Club has been rather quiet this week due to further lockdown stipulations and increased pressure from the government for children to be kept at home if at all possible. We will reopen after the Easter Holidays should Key Worker parents have no alternative but to send their children into school. If you need to book a place, please do so in advance by emailing us at [admin@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:admin@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk). At the very latest, we need to know by 3pm the day before so that we can assign staff and open up the school.

### Funtastic Kids Holiday Club

To offer support for our Key Worker children and vulnerable pupils over the Easter holidays, we have teamed up with Emmbrook Infants (and a few other local schools) and have organised for Funtastic Kids to run a holiday club for us. They will be based in Emmbrook Infant school hall and will be open every day (8:45am – 3:30pm) except on the Bank Holidays and weekends. Places have already been allocated, but if you are currently eligible for childcare and you are caught short, please contact Lucy on 07715643412 to see if there is a spare place.

## Zoom!

We have absolutely loved seeing all of the children's faces during our Zoom assemblies and Class Catch-Ups this week. Judging by the smiles and laughter, the children have enjoyed this experience too! The assemblies had a predictably excitable audience as the children spotted each other and said hello! I hear that the smaller group sessions run by the teachers were a much calmer affair. Thanks to everyone who managed to log in and join us. A special thank you goes to Mr. Theobald, who has spent a considerable amount of time training the staff up to be fully fledged Zoomers! After Easter, our teachers will continue to use 'Zoom' to connect with their classes on a weekly basis. We will send out a schedule after the holidays. Miss Barnes and Mrs Edwards are busy exploring how best to deliver virtual nurture sessions for some of our children. Watch this space for more information!

As we continue to embrace new technology and actively seek out ways to stay in contact with the children, we have created a comprehensive set of safeguarding regulations to protect both the children and the staff. These have already been emailed to you. **Please make sure that you read and follow these.**

The staff have been very touched to hear that they received so many hearts and rainbow emojis on the Parent Facebook page as a thank you for everything that they are doing 'on Zoom' to maintain a feeling of school community at the moment. Thank you to the parent who instigated this!



## Useful Contacts

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](mailto:admin@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk)

Miss Ruth Scales - [rscales@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:rscales@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk)

Mr. Philip Theobald - [pthobald@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:pthobald@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk)

Miss Kathryn Barnes - [kbarnes@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto: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.

You are now 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. **Please make sure that any emails written to us by your child are sent from an ADULT'S email account and not the child's personal one. Staff are only permitted to email a child back via their parents' account.**

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

Year 4 (Miss Biln and Mrs. Tinson) – [year4@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:year4@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk)

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

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

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter! [@Emmbrook\\_Junior](https://twitter.com/Emmbrook_Junior)

## Hall of Fame!

We absolutely love being sent photographs of what the children have been up to at home. Here are a few of our favourites from this week!



**Freddie's Wish Jar** - full of all the things he and his family wish they could do (like go swimming or play with friends). When things get back to normal, they will pick them out and do them!



**Freddie and Lil's  
Exercise trail**



**Araya and Ryan's beautiful rainbow** – Proudly displayed on a front-facing window as a positive message of hope for passers-by. A wonderful example of sibling team-work too!

**Keep sending us your photos!**

## Staying safe online

It is a sad fact that changes in how we are currently living and working in response to the coronavirus are making us more vulnerable to certain crimes such as cyber-crime. In some countries, there has been an increase in adult offenders trying to make contact with children on social media. A recent report from Europol warns that by giving children unrestricted access to the Internet, young children are now more vulnerable to online predators. After Easter, we will send out some information on how to keep your children safe online and also look into a way that we can run a virtual e-safety training session for parents. Until then, you might find this website a useful source of information: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

## Looking ahead to the Summer Term...

As you will appreciate, this is an ever-evolving situation and school may be closed for some time. Over the holidays, we will be considering a number of different options in order to provide more specific learning activities for the children to access at home. More details will follow, ready for us to get started at the beginning of next term.

We are currently looking into the best way to send the children's summer term Power Maths workbooks home. One idea is for us to invite parents to come into school during the second week of the school holidays in order to collect their child's workbook, within a designated time slot and (of course) abiding by social distancing guidelines. This is a bit of a logistical challenge but we will contact you by the end of next week to confirm a plan!

## Ideas for home-learning and family time

**This week's recommendations have been put together in light of the fact that the next two weeks are officially the school holidays! Enjoy!**

**Be mindful:** Try out some Cosmic Yoga for Kids on YouTube or visit the 'School Closure Home Learning' section on the Parents Page of our school website for lots of fantastic resources to support well-being, recommended by Miss Barnes.

**Be a good listener:** As long as schools are closed, Audible have announced that they will offer free story books for small children and teens. You can instantly stream an incredible collection of stories, including titles across six different languages, that will help children continue dreaming and learning.

**Be a movie maker:** Download a free stop-motion animation app such as 'Stop Motion Studio' and make a home movie starring some of your toys or pictures you have drawn.

**Be a theatre lover:** Andrew Lloyd Webber has launched a YouTube channel called '**The show must go on**' to stream hit musicals such as Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and Jesus Christ Superstar! Each show is available for free on the day of release and viewers can tune at any point over a 48hr period! **The National Theatre** is also broadcasting some of its most popular shows online every Thursday night.

**Be curious:** Visit [www.winchestersciencecentre.org](http://www.winchestersciencecentre.org) and get stuck into their 'Science @ Home' activities – designed to get families learning and laughing together.

**Be a confident improviser:** Ask your child to walk to the centre of the room and select a card (from a face-down pile) which has a topic written on it such as tennis, the moon, Paddington Bear, wildlife and so on. They have 60 seconds to talk about the topic – improvising if it is something that they do not know much about! Play this numerous times until they gain confidence and fluency whatever the subject matter!

**Be creative:** Try the **30-day Lego Challenge** (Google it!) and have a go at construction tasks such as building a rocket, a hospital (topical!), the dream bedroom or a pirate ship.

**Be grateful:** Remember to join in with a National 'Thank you' to everyone at the NHS and other essential key workers every Thursday night at 8pm. Stand on your doorstep or hang (safely) out of a window and give them a huge round of applause or bang some pots and pans to show your appreciation for the work that they are doing to keep the country going during this difficult time.

**Have a happy, healthy few weeks... from all of us at EJS!**