

Emmbrook Junior School Newsletter

Friday 24th April, 2020

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Letters emailed this week:

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Well Being Wednesday
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School Closure Nurture Letter
Zoom Meeting Codes for each class's assembly and drop in session



Hello from Mr. Usher

Hello Emmbrook Junior School,

This has been the most unusual start to a new job that I have ever experienced and certainly not the way I anticipated beginning my time here. I hope you have received the letter I sent out on Monday welcoming you to the summer term and enjoyed my short video, which can be found on the school website, Twitter and I'm told is also on Face Book. To reiterate the main points of my letter, this is an incredibly challenging time for everyone, and I would like to thank the staff for their hard work.

The materials provided by the school are there to support you and your children with their learning at this time. We are aware that life at home may already be stressful and we do not wish to add to the pressure that many families may be feeling at this time so there is no expectation that all or any of the work is completed. While some families may wish for more tasks to be set, others may feel that there is already too much. We would like you to encourage the children to do what they can, when they can. The learning must fit into whatever routine your family has been able to establish during this time.

I had the pleasure of joining the children for their class assemblies this week and it was fantastic to see so many of them taking part. I plan to do a whole school assembly via Zoom very soon, to introduce myself to the community, which parents as well as children will be most welcome to attend.

Participation in class assemblies and drop-ins is not mandatory and is completely at the discretion of parents. While we are very keen to see the children and maintain social connections it must fit in with the routine your family has been able to establish and so we will no longer be sending letters/emails to parents of children who have not been able to attend. I will be asking teachers to contact the parents of all the children in their class either via email or phone over the coming weeks to ensure we are able to support you as well as maintain contact.

You may be aware that most schools in Wokingham are avoiding any form of live-streaming for safeguarding reasons however I am confident that the procedures that Emmbrook Juniors has established are robust and we are going to continue the class assemblies and drop-ins unless we feel that we are no longer able to keep pupils and staff safe. The school has already shared procedures with parents for safe use of Zoom but should any of you have concerns or questions please let us know. Again, participation in class assemblies and drop-ins is not compulsory.

I would like to thank the Well Being team for the Well Being Wednesday bulletin. The Well Being newsletter for children will continue weekly – so please keep sharing your work with your teachers if you would like your photographs to feature in next week's edition.

Finally, I really am looking forward to meeting all of you as soon as possible and until then please stay safe and well.

When will we return to school?

There is much speculation on the news and on social media about when schools will reopen and how best to approach this. Please note that at present, school leaders do not have any additional insight or find out information on this any sooner than you do. Once the Government advise we are safe to do so, we will work alongside the local authority to plan for this thoroughly. Be rest assured that we will plan a well-prepared and thorough transition back to school for the children and keep you well informed.

Staffing Update

Farewell Miss Barnes!

We are sad to say that Miss Barnes will be leaving us at the end of August. Miss Barnes has been offered the opportunity to take on the role of Deputy Head Teacher at The Coombes C of E Primary School. We know that Miss Barnes will be fantastic in her new role. We are all very proud of her well-deserved promotion. However, it is a great loss for Emmbrook Junior School as she has made such a positive impact on so many areas of our school, not least with inclusion, well-being and with English. Miss Barnes – you will be greatly missed by everyone. We aim to have a new Inclusion Manager in post by the start of the autumn term who will be given a full handover from Miss Barnes before she leaves.

Hello Mrs. Jones and Miss Felton!

Some happy news is that we have successfully recruited two full-time teachers to join our team. Mrs Jones joins us after May half term and will take over Beech class from Mr. Theobald. She will spend time getting to know her new class before she starts (albeit virtually!) and will have a thorough handover from Mr. Theobald. We will also welcome Miss Felton to our teaching team in September who is relocating from Essex to Berkshire. We are really looking forward to working with them both!

Response to our Parent Survey

Thank you so much to everyone who answered our Parent Survey. We had nearly 130 responses in total which was a big increase on last year's survey. Your views and feedback are extremely useful to the Senior Leadership Team in planning our next school improvement steps for when we reopen. We have taken all of your comments into consideration. Once we have completed a full analysis of the results, we will share with you our next steps.

We wanted to share with you a few of the many survey highlights:

"I love the way the teachers at Emmbrook push the children to their full potential but they don't pressure them. I only wish my daughter had spent all her primary years here."

"The way the school have handled the ever-unfolding coronavirus situation has been professional, supportive and above all else, caring to the children. Thank you."

"I initially had concerns about my child coming to this school due to its Ofsted rating but... my worries were totally unfounded; the school have been totally amazing at supporting my child. With the recent events of school closure, they have literally gone above & beyond not only supporting my child but also us as a family...Thank you."

"During the time that we find ourselves in I cannot praise the school enough, they have been outstanding; good, clear, timely communication. We want to say a huge well done and thank you for trying to make it just that little bit easier."

"The pastoral support has been great."

"My children are wonderfully supported by their class teachers and especially love learning about and working on their topics. Thank you to all staff at the school for working so hard."

Keeping Safe On-line

It is crucial to ensure that time spent online is safe for young people.

- If you haven't done so already, consider implementing parental controls, time limits and privacy settings on devices and on Wi Fi routers.
- Talking to your children about why these controls are in place is a good way of starting a discussion about the importance of online safety.
- Keep communication positive and open.
- Talk about the difference between healthy and unhealthy online behaviour and educate them about potential harms.
- It helps for children to know that they can talk to a trusted adult if they see anything disturbing online.

You may find the Digital D's useful to adopt as a family:

Digital Free Zones: Keep technology downstairs	Digital Role Models: Parents lead by example online and with digital usage
Digital Sunset: Children should come away from technology 1 hour before they go to sleep.	Digital Detox: As a family, try a gadget free hour (or day at weekends)

Staying in touch

The best way to contact us during school closure is by email. We 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.

To book a place at our Key Hub Club: Mrs. Claire Freeman - admin@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk	For any queries or concerns: Mr. Jim Usher – head@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk Miss Ruth Scales - rscscales@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk Mr. Philip Theobald - ptheobald@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk Miss Kathryn Barnes - kbarnes@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk
To contact your child's class teacher: 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	For help with using Office 365 at home or to request to borrow a school laptop: Office365@emmbrook-jun.wokingham.sch.uk (Please be aware that we only have a very limited number of laptops to lend out so we are prioritising them for who needs them the most.)

Planning the Day

If you are finding it challenging to maintain a routine at home, the local authority have recommended that we share this really useful video and checklist with you which may support you as a family with planning your days so that there is a healthy balance of learning, exercise, social interaction, screen time and hobbies. The checklist is attached to this email and the video can be found on YouTube by searching for: **EEF supporting daily routines during school closures**

Online educational resources

You may have heard that the BBC recently launched an online suite of lessons, daily shows, video clips and resources. Similarly, an online classroom and resource hub called the 'Oak National Academy' was also launched at the start of the week. We are aware that many of you may choose to use these websites to help supplement the work that our teachers have set for your children on Office 365. Whilst we are happy to signpost you to these sites, please be mindful that as a school, we have not yet looked closely at the content and quality of the lessons and resources on either.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

And finally... Lockdown Poetry!

'Missing You' by Ben McPherson (& his Mum)

Oh Mrs Tinson, what shall I do?
I'm bored at home and I'm missing you.
Joe Wicks – I tried and gave up on day two;
Mr Fisher, don't worry, he's no patch on you.
My Dad's maths lessons are really quite lame;
Without all my mates, it just isn't the same.
Carol Vorderman, I know you are trying your best;
But I miss the white board and a times table test!

A SPaG lesson with Mum – told her, "forget the spaghetti;"
It's hardcore grammar and we were getting sweaty.
Fronted adverbials, prepositions and verbs;
I taught her the lot; she's becoming a nerd.
If I'm honest, we've definitely been taking it slow;
But I did paint a rather lovely rainbow.
I've played in the garden and watched some TV;
Built things from Lego and learnt to make tea!

YouTube has been brill, it must be said;
Tutorials galore to fill up your head.
I've been learning to draw, my sister too;
We've attached a pic, just for you.
Assemblies – we were once all sat in one room;
Now we're at home meeting through Zoom!
The kids were rowdy; we were having a ball;
But crafty Miss Scales, she muted us all!

It was fun to see everyone from the comfort of home;
As I lounged on the sofa, holding the phone.
We sang at the end, well sshhh I didn't really;
I muted the phone and mimed along cheerily.
So I know we have many weeks left to go -
But I just wanted to let you know...
Being at home is such a pain;
I'll never complain about school again.

Enjoy the weekend sunshine and stay at home if you can!

