

Emmbrook Junior School Newsletter

Friday 1st May, 2020

In this Edition:

- Hello from Mr. Usher
- Looking Ahead
- Transitions
- Office 365
- Zoom Update
- Home Learning



Letters emailed this week:

- Pyjamarama Event
- Club Refunds
- Governors Needed
- Well Being
Wednesday
Newsletter

Hello from Mr. Usher

Hello everyone, it was fantastic to have so many of you join me for our whole school assemblies today. I should start by apologising if you were unable to join us for the first meeting due to a limit on participants. We were unaware of the limit until too late and so I am sorry if you missed out. The assembly will be available to watch via Teams in the optional extras folder where you find your home-learning each week. Thank you to Mr Theobald for running the admin at the meeting and putting the recording onto Teams. We are going to look at how we might be able to do future whole school assemblies while in lockdown that will allow everyone to join in.

I am aware that with the changes in the weather this week, many of you may be feeling more trapped than ever while others may feel anxious about reports in media speculating about phased returns to school. Most of the time we are being given information at the same time as everyone else and we will share any information we have with you as soon as possible. I'd like to thank the Well-being team for their on-going work supporting the community and I thank you for your continued support and patience. I have only been at the school for two weeks now and despite the strange circumstances I have really been made to feel welcome by the community so thank you to all the staff, children, parents and members of the wider community for their kind words.

As ever, please stay in touch and stay safe.

Looking ahead...

We have still not been given a date for when schools will start to reopen again. It is hard to predict what this will look like and how it will happen. However, the Senior Leadership Team have started thinking about how best we can approach this with the needs of the children, staff and community of Emmbrook Junior School in the forefront of our minds. Our key priority will be to ensure that we provide the best pastoral support we can with well-being, mental health and nurture being high up on the agenda.

A new kind of 'normal'...

We recognise that this will not be a 'normal' return to school. A period of adjustment will be needed whilst we all settle back into the usual rhythms of school and re-establish relationships, routines and expectations. There is often a degree of anxiety and excitement at the start of a new term; we know that this will be greatly magnified this time round. Many children may feel anxious about leaving their parents and immediate family after such a long period of confinement. Even for those children who cannot wait to regain their freedom and see their friends, they will no doubt have some worries too. We will ensure that we support the children in coping with these challenges.

Differences in learning

There will be a huge range in what learning children have engaged in whilst not at school or whilst attending our Key Hub Club. We therefore plan to respond to what children have actually learnt (rather than what we expected them to learn) and take the time to celebrate individual achievements, particularly the non-academic ones. All of this is important, regardless of whether it is on the curriculum

or not - and is key to who our children have become. The teachers will ensure that we take a balanced approach to moving on with the curriculum. We will teach, revise and revisit the key knowledge and skills the children need, particularly in English and Maths, to get them back on track whilst being mindful of their well-being.

Share your experiences...

Families will have been affected in many ways whether it be by bereavement, changes in jobs or in family circumstances. Tragically, there will be very few communities across the country who will not have lost members due to the coronavirus. Please do let us know if you have been particularly affected so that we can offer appropriate support to your children now and on their return to school.

Transitions

We will find ways to mark important rites of passage for our children, particularly our Year 6 cohort who will be moving on to Secondary School in September. Thank you to the team of parents already starting some organisation behind the scene for hoodies and year books.

We are in contact with the Secondary Schools that our Year 6 children are moving onto and our Year 6 team will be carrying out thorough handovers so that key information about each child is passed up. More information will follow from the Secondary Schools in due course.

If you have a child in Year 2 who is joining us in September, we will contact you at a later date to advise you on how we will support your child with their transition into Year 3 and to give you the information you need as a parent. Over the last few years, we have built a very strong transition program with the Infant School and we will work closely with them again this year to make sure it is just as successful. Please bear with us on this as we will not be in touch until we have a clearer idea of when we will be returning to school.

Office 365

All learning resources on Office 365 have now been saved as PDF files which means that they cannot be edited. (We had a few issues last week where children were accidentally typing directly onto PowerPoints or deleting slides and then the document automatically saving!) There have also been a few instances where parents or children have unintentionally deleted documents from their year group area of Teams meaning that other families cannot then access the files. If this happens to you, do not worry! Just send us an email as soon as you can and we will quickly upload the file again.

Zoom Update

We wanted to keep you updated around the school's choice of using Zoom as a way of communicating and keeping in touch with the children during this time. As you may have seen in the press, there have been some concerns around the security of using Zoom. This is something that we take extremely seriously as the safeguarding of your children is at the heart of all we do.

At the start of the week, the SLT met (virtually) with Wokingham Borough Councils schools' ICT team to discuss our use of Zoom and to ask if it should be something that we continue to use or not. After a very positive meeting (where we went through all the safeguarding procedures and training we have put in place for staff over the last month) the ICT team said that they were satisfied with the tight security measures we have put in place. One of the key messages that we received from them was that we are one of only two or three primary schools in Wokingham (out of approximately 40!) doing anything 'live' via video link for our children – this is something that we are extremely proud of. This is down to the hard work of our staff to get themselves up to speed and create time for this to happen. In life there are always going to be risks in everything we do, but it is important that we weigh up those risks against the positive impact something might have. We strongly believe in the importance of weekly face-to-face contact with

our children. The pastoral care of our children is paramount and keeping in touch with them is something that all the staff feel passionately about in this school. If any parents do not feel comfortable with their child using Zoom, please do let us know as there are other ways we can keep in touch.

Some of the key procedures we have put in place:

- Zoom has been fully risk assessed and signed off by Mr Usher. (Please let us know if you would like a copy of our risk assessment).
- All staff have been fully trained in setting up meetings appropriately and in using the latest security features i.e. screen share off, chat off, locked sessions and so on.
- All staff have a detailed check list for each session - what to do before, during and after a meeting.
- No meeting IDs or passwords are shared publicly – these are all emailed securely to parents.
- All meetings have at least two members of Emmbrook Junior School staff attending.
- All staff have signed and agreed to a Safeguarding Procedure for the use of Zoom to adhere to.
- All parents have been emailed Zoom procedures for home use.
- Every session is recorded and stored securely on the school server.
- Parents can switch off their child's webcam if they wish.

When children sign into Zoom, please can they use their first names as teachers will not admit users with names that they do not recognise.

School Uniform

It's not just any school uniform at EJS... it's an M&S school uniform!

Yes, that's right! We are shortly going to be changing our school uniform supplier to M&S! We will let you all know as soon as M&S has our emblomed uniform in stock. (This is now likely to be July due to the current situation.) Please continue to use Goodies for now.

Talking of school uniform, if your child has suddenly had a growth spurt during lockdown, please do not worry too much about ordering new uniform for the rest of this term. We will temporarily relax our uniform policy if we reopen in the summer term as we know that it might be hard to get hold of what you need. We will welcome all children back to school and not penalise them for not having quite the right uniform on.

Home Learning

We will continue to provide daily learning opportunities for English, Mathematics and the wider curriculum through the Learning Journey, which can all be accessed through Teams. We are aware that many of you may be coming to the end of the exercise books we provided to record work in. We have looked at ways that we can reasonably and safely provide new books. However, we feel that the safest option is to ask that once the book provided is full then please use your own pad of paper. We know this is less than ideal, but paper/pads can be picked up relatively cheaply from the supermarket during your usual grocery shop. If you are struggling with recording tasks then please contact teachers through the class emails and we will try to identify a solution.

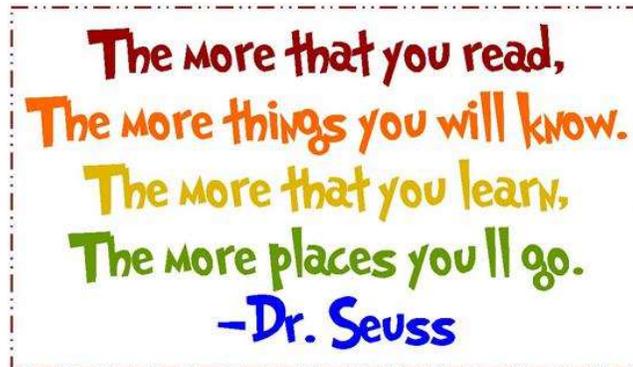
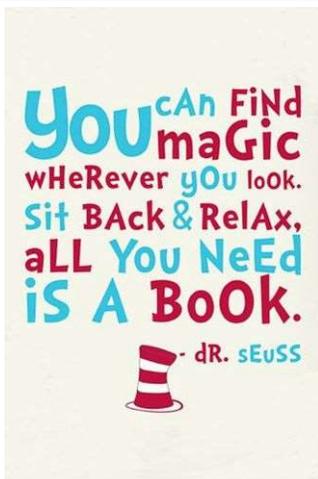
As we have previously stated the expectation for the learning tasks being set are that children complete what they can, when they can. This must fit in with your family circumstances. At present, we do not ask that work be submitted to teachers as this may cause stress to some families. However please do share anything you have been working on with your teachers via email if you wish. This could be story you have been writing or a picture you have drawn. We'd love to see what you're doing.

Be a book worm!

One of the best ways for children to give their brains a good work-out during lockdown is to read every day. Making a comfy space to read at home is a fun activity for children to try. With a blanket or a cushion and a corner just for them, they can have a perfect hideaway to dive into a story. We hope some of you were able to get involved in the Book Trust's Pyjamarama's online event today. If so, please send us your photographs and tell us what you enjoyed the most! We'd love to hear.

The website below is full to the brim of fantastic book recommendations, reading events, online freebies and top tips for continuing your child's reading journey at home. It is well worth a visit.

<https://www.sla.org.uk/school-closure-resources-books-and-reading>



A bit of fun!

The staff have all been meeting each week both professionally and socially. Miss Barnes and Mr. Fisher have each led a staff quiz over the last few weeks. Much head-scratching, hilarity (and possibly a bit of sneaky googling out of shot of the webcam) has ensued! One round of Mr. Fisher's quiz this week included some anagrams. Parents - why don't you see if you can unscramble these words? Answers in next week's newsletter!

- 1) **Think Legion** (a film and a stage show)
- 2) **To Ritual Ale** (A French inspired savoury dish)
- 3) **Moan Habit** (A Sportsman and a hero of Mr. Fisher's)
- 4) **Trove Hum** (A drink - one for cocktail lovers)
- 5) **Chased Crinkles** (A classic author)

Have an enjoyable and relaxing weekend!