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Headteacher: Mrs J Paterson

31st March, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the government continues to put measures in place, I will share these with you by letter, so that you can be confident that the newsletter for the children will contain only content that is specifically for the children.

The government announced that parents and carers on low incomes who have qualified for free school meals will be able to use a voucher system now that the meals are not being provided to the children in school. If this applies to you, you will have already been contacted by school last week, and at the point that the system becomes available for us to use, we will contact you again. If you have not previously registered for free school meals and you are wondering about eligibility now, a letter will be sent to you shortly, setting out the criteria and the means by which we can check eligibility on your behalf.

The DfE have asked that advice on mental health is shared widely and have included a document that you may find useful to share

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): an easy read-guide to looking after your feelings and your body](#)

- [Every Mind Matters](#) provides simple tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health. If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.
- You can access free easy [ten minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or try other exercise videos at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has tips for [keeping active at home](#).
- The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep.
- Visit the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools, if you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood.
- If you already have a mental health problem, you can access [comprehensive guidance provided by Mind](#).

In particular, there is useful information about how children may be responding to the current situation.

For infants to 2-year olds

Infants may become more easily distressed. They may cry more than usual or want to be held and cuddled more.

For 3 to 6-year olds

Preschool and kindergarten children may return to behaviours they have outgrown. For example, toileting accidents, bed-wetting, or being frightened about being separated from their parents or caregivers. They may also have tantrums or difficulty sleeping.

For 7 to 10-year olds

Older children may feel sad, angry, or afraid. Peers may share false information but parents or caregivers can correct the misinformation. Older children may focus on details of the situation and want to talk about it all the time, or not want to talk about it at all. They may have trouble concentrating.

For preteens and teenagers

Some preteens and teenagers respond to worrying situations by acting out. This could include reckless driving, and alcohol or drug use. Others may become afraid to leave the home. They may cut back on how much time they connect with their friends. They can feel overwhelmed by their intense emotions and feel unable to talk about them. Their emotions may lead to increased arguing and even fighting with siblings, parents, caregivers or other adults. They may have concerns about how the school closures and exam cancellations will affect them.

There is an extensive document here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

We will put some ideas for Easter holiday activities on the school website at the end of this week. For the beginning of next term, we will use a timetable format to help to structure the learning for each class.

And finally, on behalf of the staff, a sincere thank you, to all of you who have expressed such admiration for the staff and gratitude to them for moving so swiftly to put things in place.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mrs Paterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Mrs Paterson