

Boughton under Blean and Dunkirk Methodist Primary School

Wednesday 25th March

Dear Parents

I hope you, your children and your wider friends and families are all well. I wrote last week that these are 'troubling times' but perhaps this needs to be upgraded to 'frightening times'. We could all see the prospect of more strict lockdown procedures coming into place when it appeared the general public were not accepting the seriousness of the situation and so, as parents, we face challenging days, weeks and months ahead. Of course those of us with family members that might be deemed vulnerable are particularly concerned but this is definitely affecting how we all live our lives.

As a parent myself I fully understand the frustrations of home learning! Although my children might not agree, I am fortunate that I have lots of ideas for activities that I can give them but home isn't school and I know it isn't easy for you all. I think a clear structure helps and although I have told myself that this is for the benefit of my children I have realised that it is also beneficial to me too. These are long days and as adults it is important we find time for ourselves too.

I am reminded of the story of John Wesley (your children will be able to tell you lots about him). His mother was a formidable woman, born in 1669, she had 19 children and she taught those that survived infancy to read and write as well as the teachings of the bible, Latin and so on. She clearly got many things right as one son, Charles, wrote about 6500 hymns and another, John, founded Methodism. This is not where I say to you to aim high with the home learning, personally one of my sons hates writing with a passion and the other can't even find his shoes, but there is another fact about her. Apparently each day she would find time, let say 30 minutes, when it was her time. She would read, probably the bible, and was to be left completely alone. I'd imagine this was her chance to find inner peace in a busy household. No questions, no arguing, no noise, just peace. Try it. I have been following this in my house – 20 to 30 minutes of quiet reading in the afternoon. I'm even having the chance to get lost in a good book. Our focus in our collective worships this term has been 'peace' and we asked the children to think about time and space for quiet so they will understand the need for this.

The reason I write this is because apart from the virus itself the biggest challenge will be individuals' well-being. We think a lot about this at school and I worry about my staff as well as the children. We pride ourselves on being a community in our school, a family, there for each other. I have realised that it is more than a school, more than just a job, and our strength is our togetherness. As togetherness can be hard in isolation I would ask you to talk to your children about our values of peace, kindness and compassion. Think of others at this difficult time, those that are ill and those that are lonely, those that are struggling with the chaos of the children being home and those that are struggling because their day lacks focus. If those thoughts take the form of a prayer, pray with your children (they are excellent at writing prayers) but if not a moment of reflection can be just as good.

Finally, thank you for your supportive comments and emails at the end of last week. The staff and I really appreciate them. The school operates for a handful of children with a skeleton staff in place and the rest of us are working from home. We have no more idea of the time frame for all this than anyone else but clearly it will be a long haul.

Keep safe and keep well and don't forget to look for those snippets of peace.

Yours Sincerely

Mr S J Way