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8<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

Dear St. Anne's families,

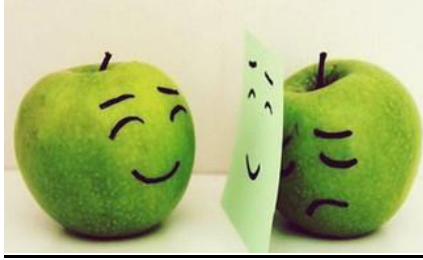
I sincerely hope you are all safe and well.

We have never before had to face such challenging circumstances and we appreciate how much you are continuing to do to support your children at home with their learning. We will continue to provide access to on-line resources to help with home-learning but if you are unable to access this material, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or the school if you require further work packs.

We advise that as much as possible to try to continue with a routine for children to access either their on-line resources or work packs. Continuing to promote a love of reading can provide hours of enjoyment, our younger children can access 'Oxford Owl' which has lots of lovely resources – including stories which can be read to them and in the junior department 'Reading Plus' offers a wide variety of reading materials to enjoy. Writing daily diaries, accessing the challenges on 'TT Rockstars' all help promote a love of learning. Engaging in lots of fun activities such as baking and craft activities are never to be underestimated – we know a lot of our families have enjoyed spending the extra time together.

A few parents have found it difficult to motivate the children as the weeks have gone by. Please try not to worry over this, we understand that it is a difficult time for everyone. Try to focus on all the lovely things that the children have enjoyed instead– being with their families, enjoying the sunshine, supporting our key workers with the neighbours together - clapping in appreciation and engaging in various activities together at home.

Emotional and physical health can be severely compromised during these unsettling times. Try to look after yourselves too. **Self-care** is very important, as we are often the last person we think about and look after.



How are you feeling?

***“There is no health without mental health.”  
(World Health Organization, 2009)***

It’s particularly important at this time to enable us to be as resilient as possible for ourselves, to help manage and alleviate our children’s worries, and provide them with re-assurance. Some hopefully helpful links are detailed below:

**Mental Wellbeing audio guides**- from NHS Every Mind Matters

**Understanding anxiety** - colourful guide from the Priory Group

**A free app for sleep, anxiety and stress**- from Insight Timer

**e-learning: staying mentally well through Covid19** - from Pooky Knightsmith

We also have lots of resources on our school website, you can find this by going to the Keeping in Touch Section and then Latest News.

You are all doing such a wonderful job and together we will get through this. If you need any support at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch with school, we will always try our very best to help.

I know a lot of parents are anxious about children returning to school. This is very understandable during these times but please rest assured you alone make the decision this term as to whether your child returns to school. The children will not be penalised in any way for their attendance this term – the government have assured this.

For some families, there might be no option other than your child returning to school. I wish to reassure you that we have put everything we can in place for the children and staff to return as safely as possible – not just over the coming weeks but for whenever your child does return to school.

Our aims are:

### **Safety as a priority**

We want you and your child to feel safe, calm and re-assured when your child returns to school. So have already created an environment that we believe feels physically and emotionally safe for all of us. We are continuing to establish consistency around hygiene and other safety rules which the school staff role-model noticeably, and we will praise your child for following accordingly. We will of course support any child who has any misunderstandings and refer to the benefits of what we are doing.

## **Welcoming our children back**

When your child returns, we want them to feel excited and happy coming into school and know that we are genuinely delighted to be able to see them again. We have really missed them all. Our children will need to be reminded and reassured as to how much they are loved and valued - that they belong, and feel a part of all we do in school - we will do everything possible to enable this. Our St. Anne's values of Family, Friendship, Confidence, Honesty, Understanding and Hope will be ever-present and more needed now than ever.

We will focus primarily on settling your children in, on meeting their social and emotional needs first and foremost, and on their readiness to learn skills. The general expert consensus is that we should be laying the foundations for them in terms of nurture first and foremost, not solely teaching them in the plain, traditional sense.

We recognise the individuality of all our children, and that they may have had very different experiences of Home Learning and staying at home, even within the same family. Many children will naturally have mixed feelings and attitudes about coming back to school. Our priority will be on supporting every child on their return to school and enabling them to feel safe and happy within our new school arrangements.

This Covid generation of children are going to be unique, and we want to enable them to flourish which will not be an overnight job. We have the potential to do lots of good here, and to repair the significant rupture that this virus has caused on children and their families. We aim to prepare our children to be strong adults in the future as well as happy and resilient children in their present.

## **Continue to Support our Families**

Our school motto is 'Many hearts make a school'. This is so very true – the dedication of staff, governors and parents in helping create a truly inclusive environment within our school, where our children feel safe and surrounded by support is at the heart of all we do. Our children know that they can rely on all the adults around them and that we are all reinforcing the same messages and sense of togetherness.

We will continue to keep in touch through – email, text messages, twitter and the school website to ensure that we are all supported with up to date information. Before your child returns, we will provide information on the current procedures in school along with times etc. about the school day. Please do not hesitate at any time to contact the school with any concerns you may have. We truly value your opinions, suggestions and constant support that you have continued to provide throughout this period in time.

Myself and the staff are really missing our children, the quietness of the building now seems very strange and so after opening again to a few children it is lovely to hear the sound of children's voices and laughter in our school once again. Hopefully, in the near future those voices and laughter will be echoed around the building – but only when we know it is safe to do so. Until then, please take care of one another – you are always in our thoughts and prayers.

With warmest wishes to you all.

Julie Simons & all of our wonderful St. Anne's team

