



# SCARTH JUNIOR ACADEMY

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Principal Neville Rice

10 April 2020

## Reflections and Thoughts of a Headteacher



Dear Parents/Carers

Hopefully you are all having some kind of Easter Break and having some quality family time together. It's been a week (might seem much longer!) since I sent you my last letter. After hearing from lots of parents/carers/children and staff, I thought was the right time to send a letter home with some of my thoughts and reflections.

### **Current Situation**

After getting over the initial shock/novelty of having your child/children at home and trying to 'home school' them, this has now most probably worn off and the reality of the situation is starting to sink in. Not only has the reality started to sink in, but we are in times of so much uncertainty. When will lockdown be relaxed? When will it be fully lifted? Should it be lifted/relaxed? When will schools reopen? What will happen when the children are back in school? Like yourselves, I don't have the answers to most of these questions. Some parents/carers have settled down and have decided that a routine of learning is best for their child/children. Others have gone in the complete opposite direction and are doing very little routine that is learning based. There are those parents/carers that are taking the opportunity to teach their children 'home learning skills' – washing up, hoovering, painting decking, laying the table, cooking etc. Then there are those parents/carers who are developing a mixture of the above. All I can say is that none of these approaches are right or wrong. You know your children the best and what works for them. It's not getting worried about what other parents/carers are doing with their children; it's about what you think is best. All I can say is that you know where we are if you need advice or support!

### **Contact Calls**

Our learning is based on the importance of relationships and so keeping contact going with yourselves and your children is at the top of our priority list! One of main approaches is our weekly 'contact programme'. This is based on your child's class teacher catching up with your child once a week via a phone call. This has been a resounding success, but we have had one or two teething problems with it. The call from your child's class teacher is not to check up any work that they have completed, but to just check in and have a chat about what they have been doing and how they are feeling. Over the Easter Break, we have relaxed this a bit so don't worry if you do not get a call. On a Friday, I will be making a few calls to some children who their class teacher has not been able to contact for any reason. Don't worry, this is not a checking up on you, it's just to make sure that we have heard from every child on a regular basis.

### **Resource Packs**

This is a resource that we are offering to our pupil premium children. This is a pack of resources like paper, pencils, rubbers, sharpeners, whiteboards, exercise books, tennis ball, skipping rope etc. We have started delivering these packs this week and are aiming to try and get them delivered by the end of Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April. Every two weeks, we will be replenishing these packs so if there is anything that you need, within reason, then please let your child's class teacher know or email Mrs Rose ([ruth.rose@scarthojunior.co.uk](mailto:ruth.rose@scarthojunior.co.uk)) who is leading on this project. As we have been delivering the packs, we've had some great chats and catch ups with parents/carers and children. Please be aware, there is no expectation that children have to do 'home learning' as they have these packs. We are not coming back in two weeks time and expecting to collect any learning they have completed. However, we will be collecting reading books and replacing them. Whilst these resource packs are primarily for pupil premium children, if there are any other parents out there that are experiencing issues around resources, please let us know and we'll see what we can do.



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## Free School Meal Vouchers

As a school, we have decided to not have meals cooked on site whilst partially closed. We have chosen to go down the voucher route for those parents that are entitled to free school meals. The voucher option we have taken is where we order the vouchers and then deliver them to you. However, there has been a national issue with the website that you order the vouchers from. Whilst we have received some vouchers, we have not received all of them yet. I ordered the vouchers on the morning of Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April and as of lunchtime on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April, I have yet to receive our next order. At the start of the order, we were reassured that the order would be complete within one hour!! Please bare with us, we will get the vouchers to you as soon as we get them!

## Home Learning

Whilst we are only three weeks into 'home learning', it feels like a lot longer! At the start of our partial closure, we supplied an A4 sheet of activities that you could do. Over the Easter break, we have relaxed this approach and have sent home a sheet of suggested Easter learning activities. At this point in time, we are developing our next offer, which will hopefully come out on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April. Please remember, the learning we send out is only an offer, you do not have to be doing this or trying to replicate a 'normal school day' at home!

## School Re-opening

Obviously, there is a lot in the media in terms of when school is reopening. Please be reassured I have received nothing informing me of any developments in regards to school opening; as soon as I do, I will let you know. All I can say is, we will only open school when we know it is safe for everyone to be here – staff, children and parents/carers alike.

## Positive Feedback

At times like this, it's very difficult to keep up high levels of motivation. However, getting all the positive feedback has been a real boost for us. This has come from conversations as we deliver packs, calls from class teachers, the great things we see on Twitter, the emails we receive from you, the work that the children are sending us and those other comments that we are shown that take place on social media. Please keep these flooding in as it really helps us all in school and at home.

It looks like the weather is going to be good over the Easter weekend. Let's just make sure that we all adhere to the lockdown and we'll soon be back together as a great team again!

Thank you again for your continued support and understanding

Mr Rice