

Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear Mums, Dads and Carers,

We are now at the end of week 3 of lockdown! I think it is fair to say that with the inclement weather and the stress and intensity of the lockdown situation, we are all feeling the pressure. Thank you for the continued support and encouragement for the school and all that is being offered. I am so proud of the teachers and support staff who are really going above and beyond. They are all in the Golden Book this week!  
We know how much you are doing to support your children at home- **thank you.**

I was struck by this verse which was shared with me recently. I know it will resonate with many of you. Whether the words touch you or not, I do hope that you find ways to be refreshed this weekend.



Here are is a selection of ideas which might be useful.

Story about care : <https://vimeo.com/502204618>

Activity ideas based on Self-care for you to share as a family :  
[https://treasures.valuesbasededucation.com/downloads/vibes\\_self-care.pdf](https://treasures.valuesbasededucation.com/downloads/vibes_self-care.pdf)

**Home Schooling Tips:** Ten top tips for parents about how to manage the stresses of home schooling. Includes tips such as how to avoid stress, be kind to yourself and your child, and how to be a good listener: <https://vimeo.com/502216092>

To **ease the strain at home**, next week the children's exercise books, along with additional paper and stationery, will be available to be collected from school. To provide social distancing, the following times have been allocated to each year group. If you have children in more than one-year group, the packs will be combined and distributed with the oldest sibling.

**Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> January:**

**Bottom gate:**

09.00 – 10.00: Reception

10.00 – 11.00: Year 1

11.00 – 12.00: Year 2

**Top gate:**

09.10 – 10.10: Year 3

10.10 – 11.10: Year 4

**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January:**

**Top gate:**

09.10 – 10.10: Year 5

10.10 – 11.10: Year 6

By providing the children's exercise books, we are expecting the standard of work (including presentation) to be in line with school expectations. Please see attached expectations for Maths and Written presentation.

You may have seen in the news recently that we are due to receive our Lateral Flow Device tests for staff to test twice weekly (they should be in school early next week). This means that we will be able to identify any staff who are asymptomatic. It does however mean that we may have to close a bubble at very short notice. I am sure you understand that this is for the greater good. We know it will make it very tricky for those of you who are relying on children being in school. We will aim for teaching and learning to continue as long as the member of staff is well. Dependent on the time that we learn of the positive result, there will be a text message/parent mail to let you know of any bubble closure. We are delighted that this will be up and running so quickly. I am grateful to the office team and Mrs Bird for all the support in this added task. Please continue to help us by following the government guidance. You will find our updated Guide to Remote Learning on our website in the announcements or on the 'letters home' page.

We are thrilled to announce that we have appointed a teacher to teach in Year 3, alongside Mrs Wallis, to allow Mrs Thompson to move to Year 6 whilst Mrs O'Neill is on maternity leave. Mrs Pip King is an experienced primary school teacher who has recently relocated to Bath from London. She was previously an assistant head and brings a wealth of enthusiasm and expertise to our school team. She will begin after the February holiday. We are looking forward to her arrival.

Finally, the Year 6 team would like to share an exciting reply they received from Michael Morpurgo after tweeting him with their questions before Christmas, when reading his book Kensuke's Kingdom. They were very excited to receive his response, which is shared on the next page.

Take care of yourselves and stay safe.

Kind regards,

Jane Gascoigne

Here are Michael's answers to the Year 6 children's questions.

Tom and Tabitha: Do you write all of your stories by hand or on a computer? We sometimes feel like our hands are going to fall off when we write ours!

I know exactly what you mean. I used to write all my stories by hand in little orange school notebooks that schools would give me when I visited, but I've started recently to write my stories straight onto my ipad. I mostly write sitting on my bed, with lots of cushions supporting my back and arms as it helps to stop my hands falling off.

Nick and Poppy: How did you feel when you won the English Literature award?

It's lovely to win awards of course but some of the best awards are the ones voted for by children. It is wonderful and important to know that children have loved my stories.

Celeste: Do you ever worry at all about what people will tell others about your books?

I try not to think about what people think about my stories. I hope people will enjoy reading them but I don't worry about it too much. There are always bad reviews and people who don't like your work. You have to shrug it off and get on with it.

Lily: How much do you write each day?

When I'm writing I try to have a routine. I tend to write in the morning but it really depends how well it's going as to how many words I write. In the afternoon, I will often go for a long walk in the in the fields and woods around our home. It really helps to have this time for the stories to weave themselves in my head.

Alice and Jack: Why do you love writing?

Because I love to tell stories and because one way or another I get to meet my readers like you, and talk. We need to talk and listen to each other, and listen to one another's stories more than ever. You're never alone with a book or a story. And it's great not to feel alone.

Melinda and Lily: What did you read when you were younger?

When I was a boy I didn't like reading that much but I loved stories and being read to. I was lucky because my mother always read to my brother and I the stories and poems that she loved - Kipling, Walter de la Mare and Rober Louis Stevenson and she passed on to me her love of words and stories and poems. Later, I started reading books for myself. I loved adventure stories particularly Treasure Island.

Millie and Josh: If War Horse is your favourite, which is your least favourite and why? Sacha and Niamh: What book means the most to you?

It's hard for me to have a favourite and a least favourite book amongst my stories as they're rather like my babies. I love them all. But War Horse is actually my wife's favourite book which means a lot, and still is even though it was written back in 1982. Every time I write a new book I give it to her to read and I ask the question. 'Is it as good as War Horse?'