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Welcome back to the Summer Term

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope everyone is well and that you all managed to enjoy the Easter break and get some kind of Easter Egg hunts going on at home. I've been speaking to children on the phone this week and it's lovely to hear about all the things that they have been up to. I think one of my top responses to the question, "What's been the best walk you've been on?" was... "Upstairs to my room to read a good book." !

It's been two weeks of school closure followed by two weeks of Easter Holiday's and I am sure that many families will be thinking a lot about the learning that is going on at home. As you will have seen we are posting work on the class blogs that can be completed at home.

It is important to remember that we do not set a timetable that must be adhered to or even that this work is compulsory. Every family will and must approach any learning at home in a way that suits them, the work that parents have to do in their day job and their child's ability to manage learning at home. Honestly, as a teacher with 20 years of experience, I am lucky if I get more than two hours of proper learning out of my children at home and do my job. We do spend plenty of time in the garden, going for walks and (I'm not ashamed to say it!) dancing! Even with all my experience, I still feel guilt when I see my friends paste in a Whatsapp Group some amazing creation that they've somehow put together with everything in their recycling box while baking a sugar free cake; but that's not us and how we do things in our home – we do things our way and we are happy.

Do I worry about my children's reading, writing and maths? Of course I do (it's the kind of thing that keeps me awake at night). Is there much more I can do about it than I already am at home? Honestly, not really – I'm doing my best. What I do have to remember is that they go to a good school and that when they go back everyone will be in the same boat and their terrific teachers will help them get back to where they should be.

What is most important to me at the moment, as I am sure it is for you as well, is that my children feel loved and safe. Children are resilient; if they are feeling secure, valued and cared for they will bounce back and flourish.

This is new and uncharted territory for all schools. At Plaistow and Kirdford we are looking at how we can give parents useful resources they can choose to use at home so that their children can continue to build on their learning. We will be looking closely at how we can use BBC Bitesize and Oak National Academy; these are two, Department for Education endorsed, structured online curriculums that have been built around supporting children at home and online.





Google Classroom

As some families will be aware, we have been trialling the use of Google Classrooms with our Year Four class and we are nearly ready to move all of our classes across to this new learning platform.

There are many benefits to using Google Classroom versus the use of the school blog:

- It is accessible on Windows, Android and IOS and across phones, tablets and laptops/pcs
- It is a secure platform – only our staff and children/families can access it
- Unlike the class blog it is possible to upload and download work
- It allows for communication between children and their teacher about their work
- It is a safe place for children to share ideas about their work
- It is a safe portal to “school vetted” resources
- It is a way of our teachers staying in contact with pupils in addition to our regular phone calls

Google Classroom is a new (to us) technology and it will likely be for many of our families as well. I anticipate that there will be teething problems and thank you in advance for your patience as we all work together to iron these out.

Over the next three weeks your child’s class teacher will post a special blog entry letting children and you know that their Google Classroom is live. At that point we will send to you via comms (email) a parents guide for signing up to Google Classroom.

Please remember, you are not teachers – we at school don’t expect you to be. What you are is great parents. You are brilliant at supporting your children, making them happy and taking great care of them. Do what you do best. Any work you do at home is an added bonus, a silver-lining in what is a most strange set of circumstances.

Keep safe, well and enjoy the sunshine!

Yours sincerely,

Mr King