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|  | St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School Newsletter |
| March 2020 | Live, Love and Learn Together |
| *Important dates for your diary:*  *Coming up…* | Message from Mrs Terrey.I am delighted to be writing my first newsletter to you all as the permanent Headteacher at St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School. I am passionate about our school and its pupils so it is with great sadness that I find my first job is to implement school closure for the vast majority of our children.Staff have worked hard to maintain a “business as usual approach” to reduce anxiety and worry for our pupils but we now find ourselves in unchartered territory. Each child has been given a learning pack for the next 2 weeks. All new work will be added to the school website in the area called classes and in your child’s year group, section called Home learning. Staff will also respond to emails should you have any queries regarding school work. **Advice for Home Learning** • Schools have not ‘shut down’ – Although most children will not be able to physically attend school you will still be able to communicate with senior leaders or, in some instances, teachers.  • Don’t try to replicate a full school timetable – It won’t be possible to replicate a full school timetable for a variety of reasons. Giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.  • Expect stress – This is an uncertain and unpredictable situation, stress and anxiety are normal. • Reassure children – Children can sometimes believe they are responsible for things that are clearly beyond their control. Reassure children that it is the adult’s job to make sure things are OK and to keep them safe.  • Help children stay connected to their friends – Friendships are a key resiliency factor for children and young people. Most children see their friends nearly every day of the week and so not being in contact with them for some time might be upsetting. Is it possible for children to talk to their friends on the phone? Perhaps establish a group Skype or WhatsApp call? Perhaps they could write letters to each other.  • Normalise the experience – Normalising the experience is likely to reduce anxiety for many children. Reassure children that lots of adults and other children are in the same situation.  • Have a routine and structure – Having a plan and a predictable routine for the day can be very reassuring. As adults we like to know what is going to happen, and children like this too. A consistent routine lets everyone be secure about the plans for the day. It is often useful to involve children in creating this routine, so that they feel part of the plan, rather than the plan being imposed on them. You could display the routine using a timeline, or maybe pictures and  visuals. Encourage children to develop independence by referring to their own routine/plan themselves.  • Don’t worry if the routine isn’t perfect – Remember, this isn’t a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it’s OK to be more ‘free-flow’. Perhaps be guided by the activities that children want to do.  • Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work – Most parents and carers aren’t teachers and so it’s OK not to be doing ‘school work’ for six hours a day. It might be more important to be spending time together, building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children, as opposed to replicating the school timetable.  • Try to keep work in one place – If children are doing school work or project work at home, try to keep it all in one place so that it doesn’t spread out over the house. This can help to maintain a work/home boundary. We know that people live in different circumstances that might mean this isn’t always possible, so perhaps there might be other ways to ‘signal’ the end of working e.g. putting away the work and then enjoying a favourite song or shared dance!  • Reduce access to rolling news – It is important to keep up to date with new developments and announcements, but it can be hard to switch off from the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Reduce the time spent hearing, reading or watching news – at the moment it might be overwhelming for adults and children. Try to protect children from distressing media coverage.  • Supervise children with screens – It is likely that children and young people will be using screens more often over the coming weeks e.g. phones, tablets, gaming consoles and the internet. If this is the case make sure they are supervised. Ensure appropriate content filters are active – the UK Safer Internet Centre offers guidance on setting up parental control. Try to ensure all children have a balanced range of activities each day. Involve children and young people in these discussions so that they feel part of the plan  • Play – Play is fundamental to children’s wellbeing and development – children of all ages!  ***Never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire and never become discouraged. Be not afraid. “ St John Paul II***  **Please stay safe and healthy, I and my staff will be praying for peace for you and your families.** |
|  | The Team at St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School. |