

Wednesday 29th April 2020

Dear Connaught Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all staying safe and well. We are now in Week 4 of school closures – not including Easter – and I imagine many of you are getting used to the new normal, whereas some of you are probably still processing what is happening. I know that whenever I watch the news, the daily briefings or see one of the coronavirus information films, I often experience a jolt of shock about the situation in which we find ourselves. By next week, when the government review the lockdown, we may know more but until then we can only speculate on when schools will reopen for everyone. This has been discussed at length by TAMAT Trustees, between the TAMAT Headteachers and more widely with the Surrey Heath Headteachers. My first priority will be the safety of the children and my staff. I will, as I have always done, keep you updated as and when I can.

Home Learning

Thank you to all those parents who have taken the time and trouble to give us feedback on the home learning that the teachers are providing. It has been overwhelmingly positive and your comments are very gratefully received. I am very proud of what the teachers have achieved.

As I am sure you know, on the 8th May 2020 it is VE Day, which marks 75 years since the fighting against the Nazis in Europe ended. As a school, we have decided to use this opportunity to plan a whole school History Week. Each year group will have their ERIC and Maths lessons as normal, as well as a History lesson. The whole school will receive the same History lessons to enjoy. We know that the children will create some wonderful pieces of work and, with this in mind, we will put together a Celebration Assembly during which we can share the children's work. Please can you therefore send in just **one** piece of VE Day work of which the children are really proud to the class email address by the afternoon of **Friday 8th May**. Each year group may also ask you to send in ERIC or maths work and they will communicate that to you separately. Going forward, please rest assured that we have more exciting home learning opportunities coming up!

School Website

Speaking of home learning, I thought you would be interested to know that we have had 12,800 hits on our website since 1st April. Almost every country in Europe has visited us and worldwide hits include from Australia, China, Japan, Russia, India, Vietnam, South Africa, Brazil, USA and Canada! It seems that it isn't only Connaught children who are accessing the home learning we are providing.

Reading Challenge

As we all know, reading is so very important and continues to be a key priority in school. With this in mind, we have set up a reading challenge for the children to complete.

On the school website is a document with 40 reading challenges (this does not mean the children have to read 40 books). The children can complete a few challenges a day and the activity can be ticked off on the document. If your child reaches the different stages in the challenge - Bronze/Silver/Gold - then you, as parents/carers, can print off the certificates which will be on the website. If your child reaches Platinum, please email your class teacher who will let myself and Mrs Saunders know and we will share their success in our Stars of the Week assembly.

Outdoor Library

I am aware that many of you may be running low on reading material for your children and so I would like to trial opening up an outdoor library (bookcase) from which you can borrow books. From tomorrow, some

Headteacher: Miss S McGann

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs K Saunders

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books will be left outside the front entrance to the school. The gate will be propped open and the front door of the school shut. No parents or children will be permitted into the building. I would suggest that as part of your daily exercise, you pass by the school if you can, and pick up a book (no more than two per child). Please email the title of the book you have taken to your child's class teacher so that we can keep track of where the books are. There will be anti-bac hand gel available which we would like you to use pre and post choosing a book, and only one family is permitted in at a time. If you arrive and there are other people waiting, please remember to practise social distancing. This is also a great opportunity to return school reading books that you have at home. The gate will be open between **10am and 2pm**. This is open to Connaught families only.

Exercise Books

I know that a lot of your children are getting to the end of their exercise books with all the lovely work they have been doing! We have unfortunately nearly run out of spare Connaught exercise books but we can make what we have left, and other exercise books that we have in school, available. I will put those outside on a table next to the outdoor library. Please only take one per child.

Staff News

I am sure you will be eager to know that Miss Jones is doing fine. She has obviously still been undergoing treatment, which has been gruelling, but she has celebrated the halfway mark and has recently been allowed home. I am sure she is in your thoughts and prayers. Mrs Deeming had her baby, a little boy called Frederic, and both are doing well. Here is a picture of him reading a book – he certainly looks like he is enjoying it!



Transition

Letters have been sent to our new Year 3s who have accepted their offer of a place at Connaught. If you know of any families who have not yet done so, please urge them to confirm that their child is coming to us. This allows us to start processing all the paperwork and planning next steps in our transition arrangements, such as liaising with our infant schools. Interestingly, parents from 10 different infant schools put Connaught down as their first choice! The transition letter and forms are available on the school website, under the News tab.

I understand that some of the secondary schools have been in touch with our Year 6 pupils and that they are managing transition arrangements as best they can without knowing if the actual scheduled Transition Days will be able to go ahead. Our Year 6 Teachers will be having the usual meetings with the secondary teachers, albeit remotely.

E-Safety

If he hasn't already, Mr Stevens will be sending out a letter regarding E-safety. With your children using laptops and tablets to access online learning and chat to family and friends, it is more important than ever that they are being careful online and that you know how to support them. Please make sure that you read any E-safety information that comes out.

Phone Calls and Emails

As I said in my previous letter, teachers have been making regular calls to you to check in with you and your child. If you get calls from a withheld number, do please pick up as it is likely to be your child's class teacher. It has been so nice to hear how excited the children get when the phone rings in case it is their teacher! They will continue to make contact with you by phone at least once a fortnight, if not more. If we cannot

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get hold of anyone from your household, members of staff may need to make a house call to satisfy ourselves that all is well with you, so please spare us the time and trouble it takes to do that by answering your phone.

Lastly, I want to thank you all for your amazing support during this period in history. It has made all the difference to the Connaught staff knowing that we are all working together to give the children the best possible learning opportunities. Keeping mentally, as well as physically, healthy is so important at this time and so Mrs Littlewood is going to send out another support and well-being bulletin at the end of the week so do look out for that.

Please stay well and take good care.

Kind regards

Miss McGann

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