

27.4.20

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, and most importantly, I hope you and your families are all safe and well.

We are all really missing seeing the children and hope that our little video went some way towards making everyone feel positive that we can support each other and get through this! If you haven't seen it yet, you can access it from the app or website. Thank you to the staff who helped to create it, but especially Miss Byrne and Mrs Harrison who put it together so beautifully.

As we head into week 4 of school being 'closed', with almost all DJS pupils staying at home, I wanted to write to thank you all. This is a very challenging time for everyone, yet the feeling of positivity from our school community and in the town itself remains overwhelming.

For those families whose children are entitled to free school meals, thank you for your patience during the time we were trying to get to grips with the Edenred vouchers (the DfE route). We started off with Wonde but tried to move to Edenred because we were advised to however, due to difficulties at our end and hearing the feedback from parents who simply couldn't access the system, we reverted back to Wonde and will be staying with them until children return to school. If you have any issues at all regarding accessing your free school meal vouchers, please ring school between 9am and 3.30pm and we will do our best to help you.

A massive thank you must also go to those of you who are helping your children at home with their school work. If you haven't already got it, pack 2 is ready for collection from school if you need it. You can pop in anytime from 8am to 4pm to collect it; we will ask you to wait at the door and the pack will be brought out to you. If you are not able to leave the house, please email us on closure@djs.eriding.net and a pack will be brought to you.

Regarding the children's work at home, I would like to reiterate that it is not necessary for your child to be 'working' for several hours a day. Now that you can access the BBC Bitesize and National Academy lessons (see links on the opening page of our website), there is opportunity for children to learn in many different ways, including completing work from the pack your child's year group teachers have put together. Thanks to the teachers (and Mr Tarrant's expert IT skills) our website is also full of exciting activity suggestions that your child may wish to engage with. It is like a menu for you to look through and select from, not a list of things that all children should complete. Additionally, I have been hearing about some wonderful projects that children have been doing at home e.g. learning to bake, sew, help to build a shed, decorating and gardening (and much more). Please be assured that these are all fabulous learning experiences that will help your child in the future.

What I'm trying to say is, for those children who love the academic side of school, there is masses for children to access. For those who have a more practical leaning, whilst it is important that they do some consolidation work of previous learning (little and often is best), there are also many other fun activities they can do which will help them to learn or develop new skills albeit in a less academic sense. We don't want children to be stressed about their work; their health and happiness is key to them making a positive return to school in the future. Please do contact us if you have any concerns or wish to clarify anything.

We have a small number of key workers' children in school each day and we are delighted to be able to support these families to allow them to carry out their vital roles. To those key workers who haven't yet needed to send their children in to school, thank you for making arrangements to keep them safely

at home but remember, we are here for you should there be no other alternative, so either ring school or email on closure@djs.eriding.net to book a place.

As yet we have no indication of when schools will re-open and children/parents are bound to be anxious, especially about completing the school year with their child's current teacher and transition to the next year group or secondary school. Please rest assured that, within the boundaries of what we are instructed to do, we will do our utmost to ensure that the children have the best possible return to school and as soon as we know what that will look like, you will be kept informed.

I would like to publicly say a huge thank you to my staff who have all been amazing during these strange and unsettled times. Whether they have stayed at home to care for others or to self-isolate, been planning work for the website, planning future topics for the children for when they return to school or have been in school with our key workers' children, each and every one of them is doing their bit and I am very grateful to them.

My final thanks have been saved for our children. Boys and girls you are doing SO well and the whole staff is very proud of you. We are really looking forward to seeing you all again and we will certainly be celebrating when that day happens. Be good, do a little work each day, have a lot of fun and remember to wash your hands!!

Stay safe and take care everyone.

Love from Mrs Laird