

26.3.20

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that this week has progressed well and that you have been able to occupy your children with some of the activities we have organised for you. We can tell from the feedback we have been getting from parents that the **Google Classroom** lessons and videos are being well used, and we get a similar sense that the **photocopied materials and booklets** are being made good use of as well.

New Third Option for Home Learning to Complement Google Classroom and Printed Materials & Booklets

Recognising that all family circumstances are different, what we would like to do now is to open up a **third main option for home learning**. We would like to encourage the greater use of online programs which you should be quite familiar with already, namely **My Maths, Education City** and **TT Rockstars**. From today, and each Thursday going forward, the teachers will set a 'homework' task on My Maths and one on Education City to be completed over the next week, by the next Thursday. **Many families will want to take advantage of these two excellent sites beyond the one single 'homework' each week and we would very much encourage this if any parents prefer this style of learning to the other options we have already given.** 'My Maths' has a huge number of activities in the 'Practice' section which includes 'lessons' explaining how to do the maths, before an 'assessment' is completed. You can select activities in the practice section by yeargroup, and pupils who are more confident at maths are welcome to use the activities in the yeargroup above as well if desired. There are also numerous fun one and two player maths games in the games section. Except for Y1 (where we use Education City for both maths and literacy), all yeargroups use **Education City** for literacy homework and this program also has a wealth of activities that children can do both independently and with their parent alongside, **in addition to the task set for them as homework by their teacher**. With both websites, the work is completed online and the children have their work marked by the computer and are given feedback.

The links for the two programs above and for the ever-popular **TT Rockstars** (that is great for helping children to learn their times-tables) are the following:

<https://www.educationcity.com/>

<https://www.mymaths.co.uk/>

<https://trockstars.com/>

Any parents who have lost the login details for the sites above should call the school office to speak to the senior member of staff on duty that day to resolve any parents' home learning issues.

Teachers' Phone Calls Home and Postcards

In order that we maintain our close bond with the children and parents, our class teachers will be making **short keeping-in-touch calls** over the next three school weeks to speak to their respective children and parents. Some will be called next week, and others in the first fortnight back after Easter. Our classes are full in most cases so it will take the teachers a while to get through everyone, but we think that this is important to do in order that strong relationships are maintained between school and home. Pupils and parents will be called by the class teacher every 3 weeks on a cycle. This will be a chance for any home learning issues to be discussed, and for the teacher and pupil/parent to maintain some degree of contact. The calls will be quite short in order that this policy of calling all parents on rotation can be workable going forward. Parents with any more significant issues with home learning will be encouraged to contact the office-based senior leader on duty that day so that the classteacher is able to speak to all the families that they need to. Another initiative to keep the link between home and school alive and well is a **postcard challenge** that will arrive through letter boxes in the next few days – we hope that the children enjoy rising to their various challenges!

Frequently Asked Questions

On the school website under the Covid-19 tab (<https://www.stmaryscofe.org/covid-19/>) we have an ever-growing list of **FAQs** along with the key letters to parents sent in recent days in case any parents want to check up on any matters relating to the current situation. Please make use of it and let us know if there is anything else you would like to know. Please also remember that we have at least one senior leader on duty in the office at any one time to help parents with home-learning queries.

Assemblies and Easter

1 Peter 1:3: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Next week at the school we would normally be visiting the church to celebrate Easter, always a major highlight of the school calendar. It is very sad that we are not able to celebrate the resurrection in the way that we usually would as the return of Jesus after his death on the cross is absolutely pivotal to Christianity – the hope that Christians derive across the world from Jesus is of course linked to his self-sacrifice for all of us. At this difficult time, it is good to be reminded that this is traditionally the time of year that we consider re-birth and starting anew – we hope that this important Christian event helps to raise spirits when we need this the most. Whilst we cannot go to church, and families will not be able to do this either at the weekend, we are aiming to use technology to deliver assemblies on the Easter theme. We are aiming to produce some **Easter-focussed 10-minute assemblies** for next week for pupils and parents to enjoy on Google Classroom. As soon as these are produced we will post them on the Stream page. Other leaders across the trust will also be making assembly videos to add to the ones that we have posted this week.

Thank you once again for your fantastic support at this time; the staff continue to appreciate it. Do please call us if you are experiencing any difficulties that you feel we could help you with.

Yours faithfully,
Mr O'Brien, HT