



Bretherton Endowed CE Primary School Newsletter



26th March 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope that this newsletter finds you well. Even though the world that we know is unrecognisable at the moment, the constant in our lives is the desire to do the best by each other and our children at this uncertain time. So what a whirlwind the last week has been. Ever since the announcement of the Government last Wednesday stating that schools will close, we've had many things to do and some difficult decisions to make.

Bretherton Endowed's Education at Home

You may notice that I have called it Education at Home rather than home schooling. Even though we are all getting used to the closure of school, I am determined that we cannot try to offer school at home. School offers a set routine, mixing of friends, a wide and deep breadth of National Curriculum subjects and a teacher and other adults on hand in all sessions to support and move their learning on.

What we are all faced with at the moment cannot replicate that. Yes some structure and routine is good and a variety of things to learn is useful but whatever it looks like in your home, it is and will look different than school. Children, due to the speed of closure, may be unsettled, uncertain or even fearful of what is going to happen – just as many adults are. So the main thing that we can do in the next couple of weeks is ensure that our children's wellbeing is supported. With this in mind, we have added some resources to help parents discuss the virus on the website. Many families will have parents now working from home and this could be a big challenge to the way they work. Some families may be worried about their jobs, businesses and finances and so this is not the right time for us to be adding stress. We know that learning can come in many guises, so learning can be learning off by heart, practicing what you may already know, applying what you know, exploring new skills and interests and being curious and creative.

Our aim at Bretherton is to offer a variety of learning in the next couple of weeks that does all of those things whilst allowing families the time and opportunity to choose when and what is right for them. Children and families are experiencing history and even if we try, we will struggle to make it feel 'normal' in these early weeks. We want to keep in touch with you all and want you to be enjoying spending time together if you can do so as this is a marathon and not a sprint. There are many online support pages that will inspire and engage but don't feel that you have to access them all. There are suggestions waiting to be accessed if right for your child and your family. Reading a book, going on a bike ride, writing a story, a nature hunt, classifying trees are all legitimate activities – if your family can, let's use the good weather to learn outside.

So you may find that your child's class teacher will communicate through our website via email/phone app message or with your children through the class discussions and blogs. We will try and speak to you regularly to check how you all are and if you need anything, please let us know. If you find that what we are offering isn't working for your family, please email school at head@bretherton.lancs.sch.uk and we will be happy to help.

Provision for children of keyworkers

Knowing the importance of offering a place for children of our keyworkers in supporting the fight against the virus, we wanted to ensure that whatever provision we could offer was sustainable over the long term, maybe 12 weeks or longer. As a wonderful small school, we had to weigh up how we could offer this in the eventuality of low numbers of staff being available. We had to consider that some of our staff may need to self isolate due to illness, being part of a vulnerable group or being in the same household as a vulnerable group member. The safety of our staff and children was our highest priority as we began looking into options.

In working within our cluster of schools (many of them small) the Hub concept was created, with our schools and children in mind. Stronger together, we can now offer the children of a key worker which have no alternative provision, a more settled, safe and reliable service than we felt that we could offer on our own. Through this, we are able to offer small class sizes of similar aged children, with staffing on a rota of all schools personnel including Headteachers, Safeguarding Leads, Cleaners, Caretakers, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Support Staff and through working together ensure our staff and children are happy and looked after.

We have made a few tweeks since Monday, the first day, but overall, the children have met new friends, staff have worked collaboratively and all have made the best of a tricky situation. The Government guidelines for school settings are being followed and we are constantly reviewing our procedures for staff and children's safety. I would like to thank our staff for adapting the way they work, just as so many others are at the moment.

At the moment, the Government announcement is that if children are able to be at home – they should be. However, if you are a key worker, have no option to keep your child at home, the Hub is there to provide a place. We would like to thank our parents for their support and understanding and for being so amazing in doing just that. All of the cluster schools have thanked their parents for their sensible approach which has resulted in a smaller number of children attending, especially during the next 3 weeks of restricted movement. Those emergency places are available for those who need it. In this extraordinary time, we will continually review the Hub and make changes as and when they are needed.

Easter

Easter is an important time within the Christian calendar and so we hope that you can have some time over the Easter weekend to reflect and share the story. We have set up a page for Worship under the Education at Home page so why not take a look each week.

By the middle of April, we will review our webpages and look to add a weekly list of lessons for children to complete at times convenient for their families to each class page. This may offer a more focused approach to guide you and your child into a more settled routine for learning. Please let us know when this starts, what you think so that we can get it right for you.

Obviously, we are hoping that these increased measures reduce the spread of the virus and help the restrictions begin to relax. In the meantime, if you or your family are unwell and you need anything, please do not hesitate to contact school.

So fingers crossed we can all play our part in helping the reducing the risks and pressure on our NHS and keep ourselves and loved ones well. Be healthy and happy and let's hope we can find a little time to appreciate the little things that make our lives and relationships so special.

Please pass on a special 'hello' to our children and thank them for the work they have done so far.
Any problems, please do not hesitate to email me at head@bretherton.lancs.sch.uk

Best wishes

Alison Moxham

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