

Newsletter Monday 30th March

Dear Parents

This is the first of what will be regular weekly newsletters during the period of closure. I will start by updating you on the child care service we offer for the children of key workers

The school was open every day last week for these children. I would like to thank all the staff for enabling this to happen even though we do have some who are self isolating or are otherwise unwell and unable to come into work. Eythorne Elvington was closed from Wednesday as at both schools we had less children requiring our service than first indicated. It therefore made sense to provide the childcare from just one school to share the staff more effectively.

Thank you to all parents who initially thought they would need our service but who have managed to keep their children at home. You have really helped us a great deal by reducing our numbers. We can provide a child care service for key workers but only if the families have no other option as it is important to minimise gatherings of people.

Thank you also to all teachers who have been responsibly and creatively leading the children's on-line home learning. I hope you have been able to access it without problems. Please remember that you can email your child's class teacher to clarify any problems and to receive support. I hope that you have enjoyed your first week as teachers!

During the Easter holiday, Thursday 2nd April until Wednesday 15th April, the school will not be open as we do not have the resources to enable this to happen. As far as we are aware, all parents who are key workers have managed to arrange their own child care.

In line with government guidelines we will re-open on Thursday 16th April and continue to provide the childcare service for the children of key workers of children from both schools being based at Sibertswold School as before. Towards the end of the Easter holidays we will contact these families to find out what they need.

Moving on to more general matters it has certainly been a strange week! I hope you are all well and have enjoyed the sunshine.....in your gardens of course!!!!

This week my son sent me a poem by Richard Hendrick about the current situation which I decided to share with you as it looks for positive aspects in this generally very unsettling time.

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Although, these are unprecedented times; what is bringing me joy is the kindness that is being shown by many in this crisis. Over half a million signing up to support the NHS in one way or another within hours of it going live made me very proud of my country and I really hope when we do come through this pandemic, society continues to be united and caring instead of individuals putting themselves first. The unsung heroes in our society for years are now in the spotlight because of the key role they have to play and deserve all the respect and love that is being shown to them currently. Again, hopefully this admiration continues once we are through this as they do play a key role in every day life, not just at a

time of crisis. Please continue to support these key worker by following the advice given and stay indoors.

I leave you with this week's prayer which you may wish to share with your family.

Mrs Bird

Prayer

Dear Father God,

Fill our hearts with thy Holy Spirit.

Take away our fear, keep us safe and fill us with love and hope.

Thank you for all the people who are doing so much to help us.

Please open our eyes this Springtime to the rebirth of the new leaves and flowers.

Open our ears to the song of the bird.

Open our minds so that we can use this situation to learn lessons from which we can build a better world for everyone.

Please help us to control our selfishness and think always of our neighbour

We ask this in your Holy name

Amen