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Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

I've been looking at levels of children's engagement with the home learning and I am absolutely thrilled with what's been happening at home. A HUGE thank you to all of the parents who have been encouraging, helping, supporting and cajoling children to engage and have a go at the learning teachers have been setting. I know many of you are juggling so many different things at home and your lives are difficult and stressful. However, you are showing great resilience and positivity to your children – thank you.

I must stress to you all that we understand how difficult it can be trying to teach children! There will be times when your child won't engage or is finding things difficult. There will be times when your family circumstances are really difficult and time can't be dedicated to children's learning. At these times, contact your child's teacher via Seesaw or the Year group email and we will do our best to support you. Remember you are not alone and, although we're not physically with your child, they are still part of their class and our school and we want the very best for them.

I am so proud of all of the staff at The Hermitage; they have shown amazing commitment and passion and are determined to support their children at home as much as they can. Teachers and teaching assistants are using Teams to register children in the morning and to give them an over view of the day's learning. I know the teachers find this extremely beneficial and I hope it is helping your children as well. We are working towards having a second session at the end of the day to be used for feedback and maybe a story and we are looking at ways of how to use the technology further. Teachers are also starting to record themselves explaining learning and activities for the children, taking many of them out of their comfort zone, but they too are showing great resilience and positivity for your children. If you get a moment, please do send in some feedback about the home learning. Thank you to those parents who have messaged teachers with positive comments – it really is appreciated by the staff.

However, I feel I must point out how difficult it is for teachers currently. They too are juggling their home lives, teaching children physically in school and also supporting their classes who are learning from home. They are trying to give the home learning children as much feedback as possible but there may be a time when this is just not possible, or the quantity is reduced. I have written to parents who are critical workers and have their children in school currently to ask if there is any way their child could be at home. We want to do our part and support our community through the pandemic but we have so many children at school currently – many more than the last lockdown period – I am concerned for the wellbeing of my staff.

Commando Joe's – free access for parents

At school, Mr Cook runs Commando Joe's sessions with all the children. It's a fantastic resources that develops children's characters. They learn about inspirational people and then have physical challenges to complete together in teams. As we invest in the resource as a school, we are able to give you access to a parents' portal giving your access to some amazing resources to inspire your children and keep them engaged at home. Please go to: <https://commandojoes.co.uk/product/cjsfreehomelearning/> for further information.

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Mr Cook has also been posting videos for children with learning activities that they can carry out at home – please look out for them and let him know if your child has used the resource. I know he would appreciate hearing from you and the children.

Real PE – free access for parents

We have also invested in Real PE for the children to ensure they are receiving high quality PE lessons when at school. Miss Foster is in the process of sorting log-ins to the website for every child in school which should hopefully be coming out to you soon (some of you may already have these). This will give you access to a host of teaching resources that your child can access from home to keep them active during this lockdown period. She has also made a video for the children explaining how to use the website and access the resources which can be found here: <https://youtu.be/uMQRFXtCxW8>

Mrs Harrup's story time

I am reading aloud for about half an hour every day and uploading the recording onto our Facebook page. Teachers are also sharing the links to their classes via Seesaw. I am reading Northern Lights by Philip Pullman which I hope the children are enjoying. I do hope some children are listening as sometimes it feels like I'm reading to myself!

Internet Access

We have ordered 20 SIM cards from Vodafone to help parents with their internet access. If your child is finding it difficult to access the digital home learning because of internet issues, please let us know. The Data SIM cards can be used as a dongle within a smart laptop or within a smartphone which can then be used as a 'hotspot' for internet access. These cards are free.

Family Learning – free online parenting courses

Family Learning provides free online parenting courses for parents and carers, including grandparents, who lack confidence or are struggling to support their children with school, homework or behaviour issues. The link below will take you to Surrey County Council's Family Bulletin which offers support and resources for home learning and activities. It also gives details of courses.

<https://mailchi.mp/8f360ed0e081/family-learning-parent-bulletin-733044>

Wishing you and your families a peaceful and relaxing weekend

Kind regards,



Mrs J Harrup
Headteacher