



Dartington C of E Primary and Nursery School

Shinners Bridge, Totnes

Devon, TQ9 6JU

T: 01803 862357

E: admin@dartingtonprimary.org

W: dartington.devon.sch.uk

Together we grow, together we flourish

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you

I cannot believe that it is half term already! I wanted to say a huge thank you to you all for everything you have done this term to support the school. Since January, everyone in our school family has taken on a new role, adapted their familiar ways and supported each other through the national lockdown. I feel very humbled to have been part of the Dartington community and see how everyone has adapted and worked so collectively to help to keep each other safe.

I heard a wonderful poem last week and I thought I would share it with you all. It is by a poet called Julie Sheldon and it is called The Same Boat. I hope you all enjoy it as much as I did. I have to say, it brought a tear to my eye. I have put it at the end of the letter for you to read.

Latest Dates

I thought I would keep you updated with the information so far regarding the full reopening of schools.

Half term Monday 15th February - Friday 19th February 2021: The school will be closed during this week to everyone.

22nd February: This is the date that we have been told we should have full guidance of what the phased reopening will look like. We should have more information for you after this date.

March 8th: This is the proposed earliest date for the phased reopening of schools, but this is providing that certain safety measures have been met nationally.

1st April 2021: Non pupil day

Home Learning

The teachers have been super impressed by the remote learning that has been happening. The children's engagement has been high and they have amazed us with their navigation of the Google Classroom platform.

In assemblies, I have been blown away with how the children sensibly engage through the chat function and unmuting to share their ideas. They have shown such courage and their empathy and their insightful quotes never cease to amaze me. Here are some of my favourite quotes as well as some from the teachers:

Evelyn *"Being kind to yourself is not trying to change who you are because you are perfect in every way."*

Edith *"I am so proud of how everyone has listened to the guidance and stayed at home to save lives."*

Mr Lyden *"This term, I am most proud of the amazing resilience and effort that my Tawny Owls who are in school and working from home have shown in all aspects of their daily life. The children in school have stayed amazingly positive despite the circumstances and have shown the school values impeccably."*

Mrs Foucher *"I have particularly enjoyed sharing our class novel (The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf) with them via Google meet each day and seeing them engage so compassionately with the tricky issues within the story. Their thoughtful reactions to this story also inspired them to create some incredible persuasive writing linked to the themes in the book, showing us that we can keep our learning going whatever the circumstances. Well done children, you have all been amazing this term. "*

Mrs Mcknight *"I am so proud of the way our very youngest children have continued to put in so much effort with their home learning and have continued to be such Explorasours. They are being so creative in the ways they are engaging with the learning every day (thank you so much to the grownups who are supporting them with this!)"*



Dartington C of E Primary School and Nursery is proud to be working in a Management Partnership with the Learning Academy Partnership



The Power of the Collective

We introduced our 'Care and Share' sessions a couple of weeks ago after reflecting on feedback from some of our families about feeling isolated and unsure about whether what they were doing was 'right'. These have been a huge success and the feedback from these sessions has led to us adapting our remote education offer to support you all as much as we can at home (please find the updated remote learning policy here https://www.dartington.devon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Remote-Learning-Plan_-_Information-for-Parents.docx.pdf).

Thank you to everyone who has attended these sessions so far. They are led by you and a wonderful opportunity for you to come and have a cuppa with some friendly faces, share some of your own tips and ask our leaders and teachers questions so we can support where we can. If you haven't joined one yet, please look out for the next sessions on the school Facebook page or through email.

Technology

We have given out almost 30 laptops now to help children to access the remote learning easier. We were allocated a small number from the Government, but have been really fortunate to be supported by other members of the local community too. Some extra laptops have been gifted to support pupils by Exeter University and the Rotary Club which has enabled us to support even more of you at home.

Mr Trewinnard has also applied for BT hotspot vouchers and WiFi connectivity for those families who needed it. If you need support with laptops or connectivity, please contact the school admin@dartingtonprimary.org and we will help where we can!

Special Guest Mental Health Assembly

We have been running weekly whole school mental health focussed assemblies throughout the lockdown. We have used emotion boards and hopeful news articles and pictures to talk about our feelings and find strategies to help us to be aware of our small and big feelings and what we can do to help them. Thank you for your kind words about how useful these have been for you!

Because we value mental health and wellbeing so much, Mr Trewinnard and Mrs Pascall, our Trust Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, have been sourcing extra support for families.

They have been working with a local organisation called the Youth Mental Health Foundation. There are lots of exciting plans for how we are going to work in partnership with them so watch this space!

The first exciting event from this partnership will be on **Thursday 25th February at 09:00** we have a special guest leading our assembly. Jade is an inspirational 16 year old from our local community who is going to tell us all about her own story. Her assembly is called "**Believe in yourself, and follow your dreams**".

We would love everyone to join. The link will be in Google Classroom or on Tapestry for everyone!

Mrs Stubbles' News

I wanted to let you know that in March I will be saying goodbye to the lovely Dartington community that has made me feel so welcome over the past two years. My husband and I have decided to move our family back overseas to Sydney, Australia so I will be leaving my position as SENCO (and the UK) at the end of March and continuing my passion for this role back in Australia.

Supporting the pupils and families here at Dartington has been a real privilege. The children have impressed me so much with their strength of character, creativity and compassion for others.

Whilst this year has been a tough year for all, I know that the strong leadership and support that the Learning Academy Partnership has offered the school community, pupils and staff means that I will be leaving Dartington in very safe hands with a bright future ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community, pupils and the highly skilled and dedicated team of staff for making the last few years so rewarding.

I can announce that I will be passing the role over to Mr Trewinnard who has successfully been appointed, after interview, as a SENCO in the Trust this week. We will be working closely to support parents and children through this transition and make it as smooth as possible.



A Poem to Share

Finally, I would like to wish you a wonderful half term break and leave you with the poem that I mentioned in the first paragraph.

The Same Boat by Julie Sheldon

'We're all in the same boat' they say
But I would disagree
So many different sailing crafts
Upon this stormy sea
Some sail on ocean liners
In comfort, style, and ease
Relaxing on their balconies
....Sipping their G & Ts
Some speed along in motor boats
As if it's all ok.....
With little care for smaller crafts
Which may get in their way
Some struggle on their battleships
Where nothing's going right
Endlessly preparing.....
For the next relentless fight
Some huddle in their lifeboats...
And pray that they'll be saved
Hoping for a calmer sea...
And fearing every wave
Some drift around upon their rafts....
They barely stay afloat
They're praying for a change of luck...
And chance to board a boat
Some haven't found their sea legs yet....
And dread each wave and swell
They're struggling to stay upright
And don't feel very well
So whilst you're on your journey
To a safe and calmer port
Look out for fellow sailors
Who may need some support
Could you throw them a life belt?
Or a paddle or an oar?
Perhaps you could help guide them
A bit nearer to the shore

Keep safe and we will be back in contact on Monday 22nd as we navigate the seas of next term together.

Warm wishes

Mrs Huish