A screenshot of a social media post

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Sunday 22rd March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to start by saying “Thank-You” to the Ladysmith Community for both your patience and understanding, and for the messages of support and appreciation over the last week. These messages helped us to maintain our positivity as uncertainty took hold. The dawning realisation that Friday could be the last time that we are together as a community for many months, coupled with the situation that the Country finds itself, made the day an emotional one for many.

As I write, there are still many issues that need further clarification. We wait for the Government to provide more information on the situation regarding the identification of Key Workers, Easter arrangements for children of Key Workers and the requirements for schools in the months ahead. While we wait, the following information might be of help to you.

**Key Workers**

This is taken from the Department for Education website:

Key Workers list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

*Please follow these key principles:*

1. ***If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.***
2. *If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.*
3. *Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.*
4. *Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.*

At Ladysmith:

* Places are available this week for those who have had a confirmation email.
* Further verification will be required of Key Worker status during the week, this will probably be a letter from employers stating your role to be “necessary for the continuation of a public service” or an Emergency services or NHS identification badge. I will contact you about this when we have more details.
* FISH will offer holiday club places to Key Workers over the Easter period from 7.30am until 7.30pm. You can contact them at [info@fishkids.co.uk](mailto:info@fishkids.co.uk) or on 01363866450

**Home Learning:**

* For the week beginning 23.3.20, the school website has a sample of different activities for children to try at home and a suggested timetable. It can be found here: <http://www.ladysmithfederation.net/web/remote_learning>
* There is no expectation that any work will be set over the Easter Holiday Period.
* We understand that you may be trying to work from home, look after your children and keep their schooling up to date. We recognise that we need to be reasonable in our expectations of you! We are available to answer your questions relating to the learning that your children are doing, and any issues around their wellbeing. We continue to be partners in the education of your child, albeit from a distance. Therefore, we have set up email addresses so that you can contact class teachers about your child’s learning (the [infant.admin@ladysmithfedertaion.net](mailto:infant.admin@ladysmithfedertaion.net) email address will continue to be the place to send all other communication)

We will aim to answer your queries within 48 hours. Please add the class name into the subject line to help us. The addresses are:

For Year One Children*:* [*Year1support@ladysmithfederation.net*](mailto:Year1support@ladysmithfederation.net)

For Year Two Children*:* [*Year2support@ladysmithfederation.net*](mailto:Year2support@ladysmithfederation.net)

For Reception Children*:* [*Receptionsupport@ladysmithfederation.net*](mailto:Receptionsupport@ladysmithfederation.net)

* After the Easter holiday we have additional plans in place to help us stay in contact, to set work and support the children as they learn and to maintain the teacher-student relationship. We will be using two online platforms; “Tapestry” in Nursery and Reception and “Seesaw” in Year One and Two. This will rely on access to a tablet or laptop. If you haven’t got access to one at home, please contact the school so that we can make alternative arrangements for you.
* For parents of Nursery and Reception children, you should already have a Tapestry account set up. Please contact us if you haven’t.
* For parents of Year One and Two children: Due to issues with ParentMail (see below) and parents not being able to access parts of this communication tool, we are going to assume you are happy for us to set you up with access to Seesaw unless you email [infant.admin@ladysmithfederation.net](mailto:infant.admin@ladysmithfederation.net) to inform us otherwise.  Please let us know by Tuesday 23rd March if you do not wish to use this online platform.
* There are some brilliant ideas beginning to emerge that will help us to make the most of the situation that we find ourselves in. Keep an eye on the school website for updates. I hope to maintain the weekly Newsletter and would love to have pieces from the children, photos and information from you to add.

Lastly, we found that ParentMail caused some issues on Friday, we think due to the high volume of messages going out. I apologise if you missed any communication. I would be very grateful if this letter could be shared amongst parent groups to ensure that as many parents as possible are kept up to date. In future, all letters will be posted on the school website under the “recent school letters” tab: <http://www.ladysmithfederation.net/web/recent_school_letters/281945>

I hope you all stay well, stay in touch and I look forward to opening the school gates to everyone again as soon as possible.

Best Wishes,

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Emma Brown