

St John and St James Church of England Primary School

Isabella Road, London E9 6DX

Tel: 020 8985 2045 Email: office@johnjames.hackney.sch.uk

Executive Principal Sian Davies **Headteacher** Jo Smith



Friday 29th January 2021

Dear parents and carers

As we are just over halfway through the term I wanted to reflect on where we are at and say a huge thank you to you all. Yesterday's news about school not opening possibly until the 8th of March must have been disheartening. This is not what any of us wanted to hear, as home learning is difficult, however I am incredibly impressed at the progress children are continuing to make and that is all down to the fantastic support you are providing at home.

I just wanted to acknowledge what an amazing job you are all doing supporting your children with home learning. It is incredibly tough and you are all dealing with different additional pressures also. Nobody wants to be in this situation and we can't wait to be able to welcome back all the children when the government give us the go ahead. I recognise that you are all making huge sacrifices to support your children with their learning and we all thank you for this.

I have loved looking into all the Google Classrooms to see the incredible learning that is being shared. All the teachers speak with admiration about the children and their parents for the continued engagement with the learning. Well done to you all.

I know some families have expressed concerns about not being able to submit all the learning on time and that is ok. We know that each family has different circumstances and we are here to support you all. The government guidance to schools is that we are to provide high quality education covering all aspects of the curriculum. We know that for some families completing all the learning is too much. There is an expectation from central government and Ofsted that we provide a minimum of 3 hours work per day and we aim to meet this standard. However, this may not be appropriate for every child and for younger children in particular, my personal view is that you can't beat a good book share or playing a game.

Reading, writing and maths is the priority, so if that is all you do for the day then that would be fantastic. We don't want children falling behind therefore we are providing lessons that will support your child to continue to make progress. The afternoon sessions are compulsory and we would appreciate every effort at home to ensure that children attend these live sessions with teachers, as this is an opportunity for them to discuss the learning and to provide feedback. Please contact the school via the office or the class teacher via Google Classrooms if you need any additional support.

As a staff, both teachers and support staff, in school and online, we are continually reviewing and revising the learning provision and available support. Supporting your child's wellbeing is high on our agenda. Some

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initiatives we are bringing in include no screen Friday afternoon activities, daily mindfulness activities with the children at home joining the children in school to feel connected, daily story time and themed days.

Some of the things we can do to support you: print packs of learning, provide laptops and data cards, arrange 1:1 support with our WAMHs clinician, support from our pastoral team, teachers offering additional support

We know it is hard for families but please don't suffer in silence. You are all doing a better job than you think you are doing. If you are having difficulties in getting your child to engage, please do message via the office email, call or message your teacher via Google Classrooms and staff will get back to you to offer support as best they can.

We can't wait to see you all again.

Best wishes

Jo Smith