



26/03/2020

Dear Parents, guardians and children,

I hope you are all keeping well.

In this time of worry I hope you are finding some little pleasures in each day and making some lovely family memories!

SLIDESHOW

Disappointedly schools are to remain closed until 19th April 2020 and undoubtedly, we could all do with a lift. **I would encourage you and your children to visit our website and have a look at the wonderful St.Patrick's Day slideshow** created by contributions from our wonderful AETNS families and with help from our fantastic secretary Fiona. This will make you smile and is a lovely reminder that regardless of how much school work does or does not get done the most important focus over the coming weeks should be the time we spend together with our families. <http://ashbourneetns.ie/>

DISTANCE LEARNING

That said, our teachers are busy preparing the next set of educational material for the children. Next week's material is nearly ready and **I will send the weekly plan over email and via the Aladdin App to parents over the weekend.** If the schools are to remain closed after the Term 2 break we will introduce a learning platform onto our website so that parents and children can access material easily on an ongoing basis.

We would hope that the provision of this work to children will not feel like an added stress to families. Please remember there is NO expectation for parents to provide a "home-school" for their child/ren. We are eager to provide this work as a means to support learning and keep children interested and engaged and we will try to get the balance right but remember you as a parent can choose when enough is enough for your child. Parents are juggling working from home on top of everything else and none of us know what the coming weeks will bring, so please feel free to pick and choose material or feel free to take a full day break from school work when needed. If work does not get done one day because a family trip to the beach or park was possible- PLEASE CHOOSE THE OUTING! If a family game of Monopoly or dominoes is played in lieu of a maths lesson or a game of Scrabble is swapped for an English lesson all the better!

We recognise that children in the older classes might be able to work independently and many will enjoy the independent work and engagement with online resources, while children in the younger classes may need extra support from parents to finish a task. We also recognise that our children have varying learning styles. Our teachers are trying hard to get this balance right and will endeavour to provide for it in the material they will provide. It will be a challenge to cater for the variety of learners through distance learning but teachers will try their best and we will ask for feedback as we go. Teachers will be using online resources and many publishers have allowed the books to be accessible online. We recognise it may take a while for parents and children to navigate resources online and we will do our best to keep it as simple as possible. if you are struggling let us know via email office@ashbourneetns.ie.

COVID -19

The Secretary General of the Department of Education has been in touch with all schools and have asked us as principals and teachers to reinforce the message to our school communities on how we must all play a **vital role to help avoid the spread of COVID-19**. We must all adhere to the guidelines strictly, There is an absolute need to practise social distancing and minimise physical contact. Children are to be supported by parents in their understanding of what this means and **congregating with friends must not be allowed**. The DES have provided important public health messages in 17 different languages which can be found at this link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/>

WELL-BEING

The children's health and well-being is of utmost importance to me and the staff during this time and I believe they are where they should be at the moment, at home with their families. As mentioned in my previous emails fresh air and regular exercise is vital. The school work we hope will be a support, a distraction and a focus to give structure to the days. We do not wish to overwhelm so keep in touch.

Information on Well-being provided by National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/plan-your-day.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/relaxation-techniques.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/talking-to-children-and-young-people-about-covid-19-coronavirus-advice-for-parents-and-schools.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents-supporting-children.pdf>

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Lynn