



**Allenbourn Middle School**  
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Headteacher: Mrs Cindy Pritchard  
Deputy Headteacher: Miss Paula Davies  
Assistant Headteacher: Mr Matthew Golding

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Headteacher update

Dear Parents and Carers

I wanted to write at the end of the Easter break to provide some updates and to say I hope you have all managed to have a positive time over the 'holiday' even though it has clearly not been the usual opportunity to get away or enjoy days out and about with friends and family. It certainly is a strange time for all of us and a very challenging time for many, so thank you for your continued support and communication as we all work our way through this. And thank goodness it's been sunny!

Our small group of pupils in school have participated in a variety of different activities over the past two weeks including pebble painting, cooking, giant Jenga, pond dipping, gardening and Easter related crafts. Well done to the pupils for their positivity and a huge thank you to the staff in school who have provided a whole range of creative and engaging activities for those in attendance. A piece of their art work, thanking the NHS, can be seen at the end of this letter.

### Critical workers:

As before/during the Easter holidays, the school remains open for the children of critical workers or those defined as 'vulnerable' for a variety of reasons. If you have completed a critical worker form, but not yet had to use the school, please be assured that at any point that you should need to send your child to school, it will be completely fine to do so. We are able to respond flexibly to your working pattern in terms of days and appreciate that this may change as the national and local picture changes. Please just send an email to [office@allenbourn.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@allenbourn.dorset.sch.uk) to let us know that your child will be attending – this can be the evening before if needs be as we are checking the emails continuously. Equally, if your child is attending but will be arriving late, please let us know as the office is currently closed, so one of the staff on duty will need to be aware so they can collect your child from the front of school.

### Families in need:

We are aware that this is an extremely challenging time for all, but in particular for those who may be struggling financially or who may be needing support as they are 'shielding' or having to self-isolate. Within the next week or so we are moving over to the national scheme with regard to 'Free School Meal' vouchers, which may cause some administration difficulties so, if you are a family entitled to a voucher and you do not receive it, please let us know as soon as possible (again via the office email above) and we will ensure a solution is found. Equally, if you are not usually entitled to this support, but are struggling either financially, or in terms of being able to physically get food/medication etc., please let us know as we are able to get in touch with different agencies who will help you.

In this, I would here like to say a huge thank you to the staff who have been working hard to stay in touch with families and ensure that this support has been available to those in need.



Allenbourn Middle School Colehill First School Emmanuel Middle School Hayeswood First School Hillside First School Lockyer's Middle School Merley First School Queen Elizabeth's School St John's First School St Michael's Middle School Verwood First School Witchampton First School



## Allenbourn MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Home learning:

As we move forward into next week, teachers will again be uploading work on to Google Classrooms for pupils, following their daily timetable. We are currently exploring, with our colleagues from other Trust schools, how we approach this learning to ensure there is appropriate support for the teaching of 'new' concepts, alongside vital revision and revisiting of those ideas which underpin key learning.

As stated previously, in terms of the home learning programme, we would like to reassure parents that we do understand the challenges faced in supporting the children at home and the pressure this can also put on the use of available technology. If technology is an issue, please let us know and we are able to provide paper packs of work for children.

Equally, we are mindful that some children will work through the set tasks quickly and others will move through this at a more moderate pace. Please be assured that this is completely fine – we would recommend that the pupils continue to work through the tasks in the order that they have been set and that they communicate with their teachers via Google Classroom in terms of any difficulties or questions they have.

As we said before Easter, we do not want any of the pupils (or indeed families) becoming stressed about this. As parents and carers, you are best placed to monitor your child's response to the workload, and if it is causing problems, please encourage them to take a break and if they don't complete everything for a lesson they can either continue with it next time they have that lesson, or move on. Please assure them that we are really proud of the effort they are showing, but we do not want them to feel worried if they are unable to complete all of the work.

### Useful information and support:

We have been sent some links from Dorset County Council with useful information to support during this time. We are also posting additional information and anything we feel may be helpful on our website as we receive it so please continue to check this and if you have any questions please get in touch with us and we will see how we can help. DCC have shared the following this week:

#### **Useful information available**

There's lots of information on the Dorset Council website, this includes contact information and ideas for things to do, including for children when they're at home. Here are some of the links:

- Online resources for families <https://mailchi.mp/dorsetcouncil/online-resources>
- Schools and families: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/emergencies/coronavirus/schools-and-families.aspx>
- Information and landing page: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/emergencies/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19.aspx>
- Co-ordinated Community Response: Information about our co-ordinated community response is available [online here](#).

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to all of you – we very much appreciate all of the work you are doing at home to help and support your children and we fully understand how challenging this can be. The current situation undoubtedly calls upon a range of skills we probably don't always appreciate that we have – the negotiation skills of a UN peacekeeper, the patience of a saint, the creativity of an artist, the enthusiasm of a children's television presenter, the energy of an athlete and the self-confidence and esteem to be able to say, 'I just don't know the answer to that question...I haven't done science/French/algebra/poetry analysis (etc., fill in as appropriate!) since I was 16! We must always remember there is no manual for this – so however you as families are working through this, we applaud you.



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We are also very proud of the children in how they have responded to this very strange and unprecedented time and have been delighted to receive the pictures and feedback we have, showing what you are doing at home and the myriad of ways in which the children are engaging with learning – there have been lots of garden projects, creative art, cooking, music and many other responses, alongside the more formal learning. It has been a joy to see so please keep sharing these as, I'm sure all of the staff would agree, we miss our pupils and we are looking forward to seeing them when we return to school.

There are two things that I would like to share with you – one, as said above, is a piece of art completed by the children in school on Good Friday. The other is a speech written by one of our Year 7 pupils, Sophie, which brought a tear to my eye and I think says everything that many of us would want to say at this time. Well done Sophie – this is fabulous. Please see these below.

If you have any concerns, questions or anything that we can help with, please get in touch with us either through the [office@allenbourn.dorset.sch](mailto:office@allenbourn.dorset.sch) email or directly to members of staff (the emails are on the website).

Best wishes

*Cindy Pritchard*



### Speech from a Year 7

#### My 'Have a Dream' Speech

I have a dream of seeing my family members and giving them big hugs like there is no tomorrow. I want to talk to them without being aware of our surroundings and I want to be able to hold their hands.

I have a dream of seeing my friends and going everywhere together. I want to be able to go for sleepovers, eat midnight feasts and laugh until we cry. I want to be able to see them in person, not just over a screen.



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I have a dream of pottering to the nearby shops to buy brightly-coloured sweets or going on a nice walk or bike ride under the hot yellow sun with other people.

I have a dream of feeling the warm, golden sand at the beach on my feet and going for a swim in the sparkling blue water with my siblings.

I have a dream of going out to a noisy restaurant and ordering my favourite meal and having my favourite drink which is cold and fresh and fizzes on my tongue.

I have a dream of going to school and learning with all my friends again. Of appreciating soft giggles in the classroom and squeals and shouts ringing in the playground.

I have a dream of life returning to normal. Except normal will never be normal again, because I'll appreciate each and every day like it's the first day of spring. I have a dream that one day we'll wake up from this nightmare and the sun will be shining through the curtains on our world again.