

March 20th 2020

Dear Junior School Parents

No one can predict what the next few weeks and months will bring as the Coronavirus crisis deepens.

One thing we can be sure of, is the solidarity and camaraderie among the whole school community. We have been inundated with goodwill wishes from parents, and much as we don't for it gratification, we have been touched by the confidence you have shown in the way the school has responded.

We are a team but I could not let the moment pass without recognising the tireless work of Mrs Kelly, Mrs Shah, and Nurses Hickson and Brown. Their kindness and professionalism give strength and comfort to us all.

What follows here is some practical guidance in how we will manage the forthcoming period together:

Fees

I know many of you are concerned to know how the land lies. The GDST will be sending out a communication to all parents regarding fees and related matters very shortly.

We recognise the sacrifice you are making in difficult times and will obviously ensure that full time Guided Home Learning goes on whenever school would have been on.

Guided Home Learning

Our whole teaching team has worked tirelessly to keep education going this week, simultaneously prepping for the transition to Guided Home Learning.

Needless to say, in the event the school is unable to reopen in April, Guided Home Learning will resume from the first scheduled day of term.

Everything you need to sustain your daughter's academic education is on Firefly and contained in letters sent this week by Mrs Morjaria (re-attached here).

If you are unsure about using Firefly, please see these helpful guides:

<https://helpcentre.fireflylearning.com/parents>
<https://helpcentre.fireflylearning.com/students>

continued

INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

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Praise and reward

Just some advice on what teachers do.

Encouragement and a feeling of success really aid motivation. Praise real effort. When praising work, make it specific, linked to the work. 'That is very good because you ... '

If you give feedback in terms of where next, make it specific: 'this went well, but it could be even better if ... '

This is a time when we can really develop the independence of the girls. Where you can, ask them: what went well, what could you do better next time? How did you assess your own work? Ask them which Junior School Habits have they applied. Use your judgement according to the age of your daughter.

Rewards work best when the timeframe for earning them is known, the purpose behind them is clear, and they are properly earned. Teachers in Year 1-6 give Achievement Marks (AMs), among a host of other reward systems we use across Junior School. Why not work with your daughter to construct one?

That said, an unexpected reward also works a treat.

Looking after the girls and yourselves

I can be contacted on email (m.maddocks@nwc.gdst.net) if you would like to reach out, or just to send a cheery message about what your daughters are doing.

Please also see attached a letter from Mrs Crouch about how we will maintain pastoral care for the girls.

We are aware that school closure will place great emphasis on our parents, their friends and relatives to provide the school structure from home. We are immensely grateful to you, but it is not only the girls who need to have a balanced day.

The school will be sending advice to all staff and parents about how to maintain their own wellbeing at this very challenging time.

Reports and assessments

Reports are sent remotely, so our plan is that these will go out as normal in a couple of weeks. Like all advice, this could change depending on current circumstances.

Please do not write to teachers during the Easter holidays with report queries. They will be back on email when 'virtual term' resumes on Wednesday 22nd April.

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Targets will be included in the school report, as these are based on everything teachers see. No data will accompany these targets, as it was impossible to complete assessments this week.

Miss Carr:

Miss Carr has quickly established herself as a much-loved teacher among the girls, particularly in 5CM. They have been asking after her.

Miss Carr will continue to work for NWC for the time being, supporting our Guided Home Learning Programme. If circumstances allow, we will arrange a time for her to say goodbye to the girls.

Maintaining our sense of community

It has been poignant talking to the girls this week. They are feeling loss at the closure of school, at the same time affirming the sense of community which makes NWC special.

We will keep the community spirit going via our Gratitude blogs (which the girls can contribute to via Firefly). The Guided Home Learning will also reinforce the knowledge that we are still out there for them.



We will also keep communicating via Twitter, in a discreet and sensitive way. Please help us all feel connected by following us:

@NWC_Juniors @NWC_Junior Head @NWCJuniorDeputy @NWCEarlyYears

NB I find watching the two recent NWC videos a great antidote to sombre times. Both can be found on our Twitter feed.

So, as we think about an uncertain future, let's remind ourselves what a special place the Junior School, and NWC as a whole, is.

That we will meet again, in sunnier times.

For now, we hope that everyone is able to stay fit and healthy.



Best wishes
Mark Maddocks

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