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Dear Parents/Carers

It feels strange writing a newsletter in the current climate but I wanted to touch base with you all in such unusual times. I wanted to thank you all for your engagement in our remote learning this week. Class Dojo is working really well for most and I must say the teachers and myself are really enjoying seeing all the amazing work flooding in. Your children have been so creative and engaged in our home learning so thank you all as I know it can be so difficult juggling home life, working a farm, keeping safe and making sure the children are occupied too!

With at least a further 3 weeks of lock down, we are always seeking new ways to make this experience better for everyone. We will be sending out another parent questionnaire soon, so keep a look out on School Gateway. Also, I will be forwarding support forums and online resources set up for families in this difficult time.

Keeping safe online

The internet is so wonderful and a great way to communicate, especially when stuck indoors. We are using it to keep the childrens' learning going while at home with Class Dojo and various websites that compliment learning. For example, if we recommend a Youtube clip, keep their focus on this, steer away from straying into similar clips as we do not know the source or authenticity of these. Here are a few tips for keeping your child safe online:

- Talk to your child about only going on sites that have been recommended by their teacher
- Ensure children are in the room with you when accessing the device so that you can see what they are accessing
- Don't be afraid to check what they have been looking at afterwards
- Try, where possible to be present when video chats (Facetime, Zoom etc) are happening. You can remain in the background.
- Monitor conversations with friends through chat and messaging and remind children that they should never engage in conversation with anyone they do not know.
- Encourage the child to tell you about anything they see that may be inappropriate.

Staying apart – Keeping together

Feeling positive and happy is crucial during this time. Staying connected is a great way to do this – we are finding Class Dojo an excellent way to stay connected with pupils and parents. Seeing your child's work or photograph of what they have been up to is heart-warming for staff so please keep them coming!

Here are some links to positive mental health sites during the Covid-19 lock down:

<https://familyresource.eci.org.uk/toolkit-for-families-in-isolation/>

Wellbeing support for young people: email - wellbeingenquiries@youngdevon.org

Critical workers

We still have reduced provision available for children of critical workers (and those unable to look after their child at home). This is currently at Okehampton Primary school, run by Federation staff. Please email admin if you require provision. Food hampers are also going home to free school meals pupils (not universal FSM, KS1). You can check if you are eligible on the Devon County Council website by following this link:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-meals>

Thank you and stay safe

I wanted to finish the week by saying a huge thank you to the teachers and TAs and our administrator, Devran, for all the exceptional hard work you are putting in remotely during this time. We will continue to answer your queries through admin email and communicate any changes as we learn, keeping you fully up to date. We are all embarking on a strange Summer term but if we stick together for the best interests of the children and families, we will get through it.

Stay safe and take care of yourselves,

Deirdre Petersen