



ST. ALDHELM'S VA CHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL  
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HEADTEACHER: Mrs P Cohen

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope everyone is staying safe and keeping well.

### School Closure

School remains closed until further notice. We are following the information given by the Department for Education about a 'next phase' but at the moment these are only preliminary thoughts. I meet weekly with other headteachers in our community learning partnership and we are beginning to consider what this may look like. Again, this is a start



but it is going to take time to ensure we get it right and do not undo all the good work we have done in social distancing so far. My advice to you is to continue as we are and worry about just this week, rather than looking too far ahead. Rest assured, I will keep you up to date when there are finalised plans to report. The helpline is available for parents to call, should you wish to. They have said they are receiving an overwhelming number of calls so please be patient with them.

### St Aldhelm's Website

As mentioned in the March & April Newsletter, which I hope you have had the chance to read, the website has been updated to reflect the information you may need at this time. A dedicated Coronavirus page details all information about the provision we are offering for both Home Learning and Key Worker child-care. The page also contains the relevant links to information from the Department for Education, Public Health England and the NHS as well as any Parent and Carer updates and documents that I have sent out. I hope this makes it easier to see things in one place. If there is anything missing or you feel would help, please let me know.

### Home Learning

Thank you all for your commitment to Home Learning. We are well aware that this is a challenge! Whether your child or children are keen and willing or a bit reluctant, whether you are trying to go out to work or work from home yourself or whether it's sunny or rainy, all has an impact on what you can realistically do. We are just so impressed that everyone is giving it a go in some shape or form. This is unfamiliar territory for everyone so there is no right or wrong, only a best effort. We are all missing the children so much, that we love to see them on Tapestry or ClassDojo. Please continue to keep in touch so that in return we can fulfil our duty of care to you.

### Key Worker Provision

Provision for children of Key Workers and those considered vulnerable continues to be available. School will not be open this Friday for the Bank Holiday to commemorate VE Day. Please continue to book children in for sessions each week via email to Mrs Horton.

One of our Key Workers was confirmed last week with Coronavirus. I can share that thankfully she is recovering well but our thoughts have been with the family as they've got through a challenging week. Consultation with Somerset County and Public Health England ensured we have carried out all necessary actions and kept everyone safe and well throughout. I do wish to thank staff and families who have been in school for their understanding and cooperation.

### Free School Meals

The new national Free School Meals voucher scheme has been successful for our families who are entitled to the support. Vouchers can now be redeemed at most supermarket chains, including Aldi, McColl's, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose, M&S, Asda and Morrisons. If at any point your circumstances change and you think you



may become eligible, please follow the link on the website to complete the online form  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/free-school-meals/>

### Looking After Yourself

I know from conversations with many of you and from my own family experience that this time is challenging. We really do hope that you have read any communication from school in the way it has been intended, which is only ever to support, encourage and help. It would seem that on some days we feel equipped and able to go about Home Learning, shopping, housework, gardening and family zoom and phone-call conversations. And yet on other days we do not feel the same strength, confidence or energy within ourselves to keep going. Please be aware that you are not alone and that these feelings are normal. Keep the expectations of yourselves and your children realistic and don't put yourselves under unnecessary pressure. In the last update, I referenced several sites for looking after yourself, both emotionally and for health matters as well as keeping your children safe online. The Useful Contacts for Parents and Carers document is on the website (at the bottom of the Coronavirus page) should you need further support. There has been some reporting on the rise in cases of domestic abuse at this time. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with the organisations best able to offer support and advice or alternatively get in touch with us to signpost you to this help.

There is also a new resource for support which you may wish to visit:  
<https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/covid-19/>



We know that all children have had to make adjustments and not all of them can begin to understand the situation as to why their routine has been turned on its head. Some children, including those with ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition) may be finding it more tricky than most. I have attached a helpful document, written by the Education Psychologists, to provide practical suggestions and actions. This may be of help to many parents, who are noticing changes in behaviour, because of the change to our day to day living.

### Parent Questionnaire

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the online parent questionnaire. The governors and I are really pleased with the outcomes. It reflects the way all staff in school work with commitment and dedication to provide the best possible primary education experience for you and your children. I have attached these results for you to see if you wish.

### Family Activity for May 2020

I am attaching a Family Activity Challenge for this month which has been produced by SASP, Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership. Have a go at taking on the full challenge or pick and choose to suit the other activities you may be taking part in.

I am also sharing a wonderful arts resource created by 'Make the Sunshine', the local company who have organised the theatre performances we have enjoyed this year. It is for you to dip in and out of as you wish, with any activity that inspires or excites your child.

### Term Dates for 2020-2021

Please also find the proposed dates for next academic year. With such uncertainty about our future, this is our plan but obviously if anything has to change in due course, we'll let you know as soon as we do.

Take care and stay safe.

Kind regards

*Pippa Cohen*

Headteacher

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