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Dear Parents/Carers

**I hope that you and your families are well and that you are all keeping your spirits up** by being as active and healthy as possible. You are all in our thoughts each day.

It has been so heartening to hear of possible relaxation of some lockdown laws in the press. An adherence to social distancing and self-isolation is making an impact. During the Government daily briefing last Thursday, the Prime Minister announced that he will set out next steps for the pandemic soon. Until we receive further guidance, the temporary measures we have put in place since lockdown will continue. Over the coming weeks, I hope that relaxation of laws does not lead to complacency and an increase in the virus reproductive value.

#### **Living and working in a unique situation**

I am well aware that we are all living and working in a unique situation and I would like to reiterate **the importance of making sure you look after your mental wellbeing**, as well as those around you. Thank you for the way you have positively embraced the new way of distance learning. It is strange and **we are all balancing many priorities which are testing us**. I appreciate your positivity and support to each other, the guidance you are providing to your children or grandchildren and the way you are helping our school community.

I hope the children are maintaining their motivation in their home learning. We are grateful for your proactive support at this difficult time – when times are challenging and patience is tested, just remember **what an important role you are playing in your child's future!** We understand how busy you are, please do not feel pressured to complete all the activities each week, please, however, continue to **keep the essential skills developing: reading, writing, maths, FUN.**

#### **Bank Holiday**

Friday is VE (Victory in Europe) Day and has been declared a Bank Holiday. I just wanted to let you know that teachers will not be expecting pupils to complete any work on Friday. Instead, I hope that **you can enjoy the wonderful weather that has been promised!**

#### **Harry**

My wife sings in a choir every Sunday and has done so for the last ten years. She used to sit in front of a wonderful man, Harry Mercer, who had a deep baritone voice and a wicked sense of humour. He died last week of COVID-19. He was an inspirational chap, his story was told in the Chronicle: [www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/tributes-north-shields-97-year-18183021](http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/tributes-north-shields-97-year-18183021)

### **Possible reopening**

Planning around schools reopening is continuing by leaders, despite (at the time of writing) no formal announcement from the government. When we do start reopening, temporarily, **it will be a very different school**, we will only have some groups of our children and there will be a number of challenges: what tasks will we ask the children to do? how will we manage the mix arrangements of distance learning/ schooling for some? what times will we offer? how will we arrange lunchtime and break time? what will we do about moving the children around the school and where will they leave their coats? what equipment will we use? will we all use PPE? **Many of these questions we do not know the answers to yet**, but we are working on providing some clarity. We will turn our attention to it fully when we know more from the government. Many of our parents, children and staff will feel nervous about returning; let me be clear that we will be using more rooms, with less children in them than is typical. We put in place robust risk assessments and I know you appreciate that when the government lets us know next steps, leaders will work hard to ensure **we do all we can to keep pupils, staff and our community safe**.

### **Pride**

Governors, staff and I are **very proud of the school's response to this current crisis**. When I reflect it is amazing what we, as a community, are doing: home learning packs, planning for long term curriculum subjects, child care for a core minority, informative website/social media, food bank, financial support, deliveries of iPads, stationary and food parcels, Easter Egg Competition, over 1000 frozen meals provided to people in Hebburn, fun campaigns (drawing, singing, creative writing, photos) regular correspondence with the community, pupil letters, parents newsletters, over 8,000 phone calls to all of our children and many community members, cards/flowers and (on Friday) afternoon tea sent out to our community, resource ordering and resource preparation, sending emails, receiving emails, answering the school phone at home, sorting out the FSM vouchers, creating risk assessments, having virtual meetings at various times throughout the day, evening and weekends. Alongside this our wonderful staff have also had their own family concerns. All of this has been achieved with a good sense of humour and a determination that in an awful time, for many, we will be role models for others.

### **What a great story: Twins, 6, in 2.6 challenge for brain tumour charity**

A six-year-old boy who is "living on borrowed time" with brain tumours has joined his twin brother to take part in a 2.6 fundraising challenge. The boys, from Lincolnshire, are raising money for charity by running and jumping around their home. James was diagnosed, aged two, with an Ependymoma, and has undergone four years of challenging treatment. The national challenge has been named '2.6' because of 26 being the number of miles in a marathon and also the date for this year's London Marathon. People have chosen a challenge related to the numbers 2.6 or 26 and have raised money for charity. James will be doing 26 standing jumps spread out over the week which, considering one jump is a massive effort, is a difficult challenge for him. Sarah Lindsell, of The Brain Tumour Charity, said: "Their love and support for each other is boundless."

The leadership team has started talking about doing our own 26 challenges over the coming week. We will share our plan soon. Perhaps your family will be able to join in too, in the virtual world we are all operating in!

### **A huge thank you for the way you are supporting the school initiatives.**

It was a joy to see the staff baby photos (on the slide show quiz - I only recognised one person), your art, your living history memories and your singing.

## A blessing

A beautiful music video has been posted online called The UK Blessing which features singers from across the UK, including the wonderful Kingdom Choir. Its aim is to fill us with hope and encouragement through the difficult times. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtl3mNj5U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtl3mNj5U)

## We'll Meet again

On Friday we will release the song we have created with many local schools. It will be released at dawn, 5.11am. **The song is going to be played on various media outlets**; I am going to be interviewed live on BBC Radio Newcastle at 8.45am. Also, Tyne Tees Television have said they are going to run the story of its creation on their evening news. The song will be played on Heart Radio and Capital Radio throughout the day!

There will continue to be many challenges ahead but we will continue to adapt, react and cope as best we can. **We will emerge from this stronger! We have the opportunity to create a tighter, more compassionate and kinder community. Let's do it!**

## And finally ...

One of my good pals was in the newspaper for a lovely initiative in his own school, well done Michael: [www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/uk-news/headteachers-bed-time-story-videos-18145449](http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/uk-news/headteachers-bed-time-story-videos-18145449) . In the meantime, thank you for all you do for our community and please don't hesitate to keep in touch.

Nick Conway

### ALL THINGS PASS - LAO-TZU

ALL THINGS PASS

A SUNRISE DOES NOT LAST ALL MORNING

ALL THINGS PASS

A CLOUDBURST DOES NOT LAST ALL DAY

ALL THINGS PASS

NOR A SUNSET ALL NIGHT

ALL THINGS PASS

WHAT ALWAYS CHANGES?

EARTH...SKY...THUNDER...

MOUNTAIN...WATER...

WIND...FIRE...LAKE...

THESE CHANGE

AND IF THESE DO NOT LAST

DO MAN'S VISIONS LAST?

DO MAN'S ILLUSIONS?

TAKE THINGS AS THEY COME

ALL THINGS PASS