

Prior's Mill C.E. Primary School

Clifton Avenue, Billingham. Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5BX

Tel: 01642 650 426

Email: office@priorsmill.org.uk



29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

SCHOOL RE-OPENING & REMOTE LEARNING

I am sure you are all aware that Government has said schools will not reopen fully before 8th March. Like you, we are incredibly disappointed that an earlier date is not possible but we recognise the importance of getting infection levels reduced significantly before returning to more normal routines. We know, therefore, that we have at least four more school weeks where the majority of children will be accessing remote learning and we just want to encourage everyone to keep going! We are hopefully halfway through!

We are keen to gather your feedback and comments about our current remote learning offer and so would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete this short online survey:

<https://priorsmill.org.uk/parent-survey/>

ZOOM



Each class in KS1 and KS2 has had the opportunity for a Zoom call today. Thank you everyone for helping your children to get these set up. Feedback from last week's calls was really positive with nearly all children 'attending' and parents commented on how much it lifted the children's spirits just by being able to see classmates. I hope KS1 enjoyed it as much today. Starting next Tuesday (2nd Feb) teachers will be offering short daily calls as a way to ensure more opportunity for children to interact with each other and their teacher. These will be at the same times as today.

LOVELY NEWS!

I am delighted to share the news that Mrs Hitchens gave birth to a beautiful baby girl a couple of weeks ago and has named her Heather. Although sleep deprived (her words!), Mrs Hitchens says she is loving being a mum and she asked me to pass on her thanks to everyone who has asked after her.

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Next week is National Children's Mental Health Week and the theme is 'Express Yourself'. Sadly, we know that one of the worst imprints of the pandemic is the negative impact on everyone's mental health - including our children. Place2Be, one of the country's leading child mental health organisations says this:

- One in six school-aged children in the UK now has a diagnosable mental disorder, an increase from one in nine in 2017.
- Effective support from an early stage not only helps children and young people cope with challenging life circumstances, but can also prevent problems from escalating and becoming more serious in adolescence and adulthood.
- Children need a way to process and make sense of their experiences, but as neuroscience shows us, **simply talking about problems often isn't enough**. That's where the power of **creativity** becomes an essential healing tool, because it offers the means for children to 'work things out' as well as expressing their feelings and telling their stories. In doing so, children can envision a better, more hopeful future.

During next week, teachers will be encouraging the children to take part in a number of activities to help them express themselves in various creative ways such as craft, music or outdoor activities. We would like



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the children to take part in a photography activity where they take a photo of something, someone or somewhere that makes them feel happy and send it in via SeeSaw. We would love to make a display of these for when the children all return so do please take part.

On Friday we are going to have a **Virtu-Real Non-Uniform** day where we would like everyone to choose clothes in a colour that they love and that expresses their personality. We are hoping it will be a very vibrant Friday Zoom call!

We will launch the week with a special live collective worship delivered by Place2Be, Oak Academy and BAFTA Kids on Monday morning – do tune in via SeeSaw at 9am.

On Monday we will also send out our first edition of the '**Prior's Mill Feel Better Newsletter**' where Miss Dalkin and Miss Rigg will give some hints and tips on keeping ourselves feeling positive.

I am really looking forward to a week where we can focus on what is good and what we can draw hope from **and** the opportunity to do something as a whole school even though we are not physically together. 😊

COMING UP

Monday 1st February



Collective Worship link will be posted on SeeSaw at 9am

Our theme next week is **EXPRESS YOURSELF**

Let's get creative!

1st – 7th February



Children's Mental Health Week

The theme is **EXPRESS YOURSELF**

Send in your photos!

Tuesday 9th February



Safer Internet Day

The theme is '**An internet we trust: exploring reliability in the online world**'

Mr Farrell will be helping us think through this important and very relevant theme

Friday 12th February



Chinese New Year

Year of the OX

Look out for some activities on SeeSaw to help you learn more about this holiday that is celebrated by millions around the world

Kind regards,
Mrs H Malbon
Headteacher

