

Dear Parents,

This is going to be a difficult time for everyone. Saying goodbye on Friday was very strange. And for many in our community – staff and parents – this is going to be quite scary. There is a positive voice too – that out of this global challenge will come opportunities for renewal and realignment. And, above all, we want the School to remain a source of support and inspiration to all of you...a focus and a structure. We are already working on how best to do that and you can be sure of further communication from your class teacher as more definitive plans develop over the next few days.

Our focus is of course on continuing to provide for your children. As a school which tries to educate the whole human being the idea of 'remote learning' presents a challenge. We are not, on the whole, a school of printed worksheets. The children learn at school within the community of their classes and the teachers draw their strength and practice from their work together as colleagues and from their interaction with the students. However, we will over the coming weeks send out work and tasks so that the children can continue their education. This will vary from class to class depending on the age of the children and the nature of the subject they are working on at the time. Whilst we are not averse to exploring the use of digital platforms, the kind of learning which can be sent through email or audio or any virtual learning environment can only represent a fraction of the education which we provide during a normal school day.

So...

Every day, we want to advise that, the children need to be active in their bodies. If they are well, try to go outside with them and make sure they run, skip and climb, that they get out-of-breath at some point. Breathe in (yes!) the Spring. A long-term practical project would also be good for them – get out the saws and hammers and build a bird box or even – if possible – a tree house!

Every day, the children should be nourished in their souls, in their emotional being. We enrich, balance and humanise ourselves through music, colour and story. It would help the children no end during this time to continue to sing, practise their instruments, paint and draw. Even the older students might love to be read to at the end of the day.

Fear shrinks and freezes the soul; try to keep the endless news cycle turned down. A hundred years ago Steiner told people that their fearful thoughts made them much more susceptible to epidemics. Keep their hearts warm; and yours.

Engage them, more than usual, in the business of your home. Much of what the children do at school is about inhabiting the school as a home, about caring for our gardens and classrooms. It is healthy and educational for the children to cook with you -- much maths happens in the kitchen! -- to carry out chores, and do some gardening.

If the children are met on these levels, they will then be able to learn, to be engaged with their spirits, with their thinking. Here, worksheets and instructions from their

teachers do come into the picture. In addition to their schoolwork, the children may wish to keep some sort of diary of this extraordinary time.

Class teachers will continue to be in touch regarding work they will be sending out. We are in agreement that, if at all possible, to keep to a rhythm of learning (a timetable) would be of benefit to the children (and you as parents) and that, depending on the children's age, up to an hour of academic work per day would be appropriate, followed by some artistic work. Then, we suggest, they need to 'breathe out' and play. Virtual classrooms present an opportunity to retain some element of shared experience but we will want to respect the principles of the education we are committed to giving. We want to reassure you that all our approaches over the next weeks will be developed thoughtfully and creatively, balancing immediate needs with our pedagogy and curriculum.

We wish you strength and peace,

CSS Teachers, Staff and Trustees