

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

On behalf of the entire HPP Governing Body, I wanted to write to you during these highly unusual and challenging circumstances. This is obviously a very difficult time for all of us, and as a parent myself with three children (two at HPP in Years 2 and 6, and a 2-year old), I know we are all anxious about many things, but particularly about our children's wellbeing and education during this unprecedented period.

We place on record our thanks to the many key workers who are keeping our country going. The school remains open to the children of key workers and that means approximately 10% of the total number of children will remain in school. In addition, the school will be open throughout the Easter holidays, so those children and their families will receive special support. This means these key workers can help keep our country going and HPP teachers and staff are also being asked to make an even greater contribution to local children's education and welfare. Even for the 80 or so children who will continue at school, their lives will be disrupted – school will feel like a strange place without many of their friends and teachers there, with empty classrooms and quiet playgrounds.

We are all in this together, so let's please ensure that we make an extra effort to communicate calmly and clearly with one another, follow official [government](#) and school policies and advice. Let's try to stay positive and not communicate our anxieties with our children who are relying on us to behave responsibly. Our children are of course extremely anxious too, and they will all be displaying their concerns and stresses in different ways. I would encourage us all to focus our messages, in forums like the many parents' *WhatsApp* groups, on positive tips and inspiring stories – we have plenty of them in this wonderful Hampton community! Let's encourage video calls amongst the children to maintain the social interaction. Let's take part in the [Chase the Rainbow](#) campaign. And if you need some positive vibes, subscribe to [this](#) free weekly good news newsletter.

If you receive a worrying, frightening or angry making story via social media then it's always worth taking a moment and checking it's true. We are lucky to have reliable news sources in the UK and you can always start at the [BBC News site reality checker](#).

At the bottom of the page, I have included details of some additional resources, which I've taken from other schools in the community, that may be helpful.

Finally, on behalf of the entire Governing Body, and I'm sure I also speak for the whole HPP community, I would like to record our sincere thanks to the following:

- The parent groups – HISNA and FoHJS; both continue to do a wonderful job in engaging with the community and maintaining supplies and snacks for those children who will be at school. Thanks for all that you do.
- All HPP teaching and support staff; our wonderful staff (who are not on holiday during this time), truly care about the wellbeing of our children. They are frantically adjusting their workload to ensure all children (not just those in school) have the resources and support they need. We recognise that our staff share the same anxieties we do. Many are self-isolating, and are adhering to social-distancing guidelines. Some have elderly relatives to tend to, and need to focus on their own health and wellbeing too. Thank you. Not all heroes wear capes.



- The Executive Leadership Team; Ms Lockey, Mr James and Miss Tester have done a tremendous job managing both schools during this difficult period. Their commitment, dedication and leadership, and their agility, speed of response, proactive planning has been exceptional. I am grateful that to have a wonderful leadership team who continue to go above and beyond for the good of the school, the children, the staff and the broader community. Please continue to look out for further communication from them over the coming days.

Stay safe!



Sej Bhabra  
Chair of Governors  
governorchair@hampton-jun.richmond.sch.uk

#### Resources:

- [HPP safeguarding details](#)
- We all need to take care of our well-being and mental health during this period of social isolation. It is important that while the students maintain some routine; get up, get dressed, follow their timetable and complete schoolwork, they must also have breaks from the internet and their devices.
- We should encourage all the students to get some physical exercise, be it a YouTube fitness session or an opportunity to get outside.
- Keeping up contact with friends and peers is a valuable opportunity to reduce the feeling of isolation.
- In addition, the British Psychological Society's Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) has published tips for helping student well-being during the social isolation:
  - Stress and anxiety in such an unusual and unpredictable situation is normal.
  - Children can sometimes believe that they are responsible for events that are beyond their control – reassure them that it is the adults' job to keep them safe.
  - Friendships are key to maintaining resilience for children, so help them to maintain these relationships through phone calls, online communication, and writing letters.
  - Having a routine and structure helps children to feel secure in uncertain times.
  - Restrict access to rolling news coverage.
  - Play is fundamental to the wellbeing and development of children of all ages, and a great way to reduce stress in adults.
  - <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-offers-advice-schools-parents-and-carers-help-children-through-uncertainty>
- External resources; there are a number of external agencies who will also provide support for our students:
  - NSPCC | 0800 1111 | [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
  - Childline | <https://www.childline.org.uk> | 0800 1111
  - Kooth | <https://www.kooth.com>
  - Samaritans | <https://samaritans.org> | 116 123
  - Shout - It is powered by a team of Crisis Volunteers, who are at the heart of the service.
  - Anyone who needs immediate support can connect with the service by texting the word BlueBook to 85258. You can find out more about 'Shout' here: <https://www.giveusashout.org/>

