

27th March 2020

Dear Parents,

It's been almost a week now since we closed last Friday, and we wanted to keep in touch with you all. Earlier this week, I emailed you to touch base and let you know that we're working on plans to set up regular connections with you, our community. We know how important it is for us all in these tricky times, especially when we're all social distancing, to find ways to connect to each other.

This week, our whole staff have been working on these plans and sharing ideas from across our sister academies. We've been doing lots of 'borrowing ideas' from Mrs Huish at Dartington as well as Heads from both the South Hams Hub and those closer to home in our Torquay Hub.

We will be using our social media (Facebook and Twitter) to have regular, fun and hopefully helpful ways of connecting. These will be mapped out across the week:

- Monday morning we'll be sharing with you some of the things our staff have been up to.
- Tuesday morning we'll be setting mini challenges for the children to do at home.
- Tuesday lunchtime a post will allow you to ask questions to a different member of staff each week. This could be linked to top tips to stay at home with the children, home learning, family support or general questions. The responses will be posted on Wednesday.
- Wednesday afternoon we will be sharing your answers from Tuesday's questions.
- Thursday morning, we will be setting a 'Riddle of the Day' to our children and families.
- Friday morning, we will be posting the answer to the previous day's Riddle of the Day
- Friday lunchtime we are asking for families to challenge the staff again via our post, please reply to the post using #EllacombeStaffChallenges. Each week a different member of staff will take on one challenge and post their efforts the following week.

With all these connections, we really do want to have families getting involved. We'd love to hear your responses, answers, questions or suggestions on each day linked to the activity e.g. we'd



Ellacombe C of E Academy
Ellacombe Church Road, Torquay
Devon, TQ1 1TG
T: 01803 293040 **E:** ellacombe@lapsw.org
W: ellacombe-lap.co.uk



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love you to send us pictures of the children's mini challenges on Tuesday. Please use Facebook, Twitter and/or our admin email ellacombe@lapsw.org to share with us.

If you DO NOT wish your ideas/ photos to be used by us via social media or further communication, please TELL us when you contact us.

We are very much wanting to stay connected and develop fun ways for the children and you to feel connected to both the school and each other.

With regards to home learning opportunities, our website has a Home Learning page for each year group- this is under the Parents tab and then Coronavirus Information. Please follow this link: <https://ellacombe-lap.co.uk/parents/coronavirus/>. Over the coming weeks, we will be further updating these and sharing more with you and we will write to you again to update you when this happens.

I wanted to also reiterate to you all that, even though Ellacombe is closed to most pupils, we are still here for you. You'll have seen our email on Thursday 26th March that, in line with social distancing advice, our admin teams are working remotely. If you want to contact a member of our team or have questions (not linked to the connections listed above), please use the admin email ellacombe@lapsw.org or the My Ed App to send a free message and we'll arrange a call back.

If your child is entitled to income based Free School Meals, we are moving towards food vouchers. The Government is setting up a National scheme, but this has not yet been launched. Therefore, we will be developing vouchers using Government advice and will be in touch with those families today or early Monday. Mrs Davey has been working exceptionally hard with our Trust Catering Manager, Mrs Keiller, to ensure that families have the support they need with these vouchers.

I also wanted to share with you all some info from Torbay Council, that very worryingly, there have been some scams across the UK are coming to light. Here is the information directly from Torbay Council:

We have been alerted by the DFE that some parents have received an email stating:

'As schools will be closing, if you're entitled to free school meals, please send your bank details and we'll make sure you're supported'.

This is a scam email - do not respond and delete immediately.



If you have any suggestions, ideas of how we can be connecting please do drop us an email. Thank you all for the kind messages you've been sending us, we really do appreciate it. Our school team are practising social distancing and working on a rota, but there is a 'mini' team on site at Ellacombe.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our Ellacombe team and their families for their collective work together to ensure we can do your best to support all of our families too. Our team is committed to do all that they can even in this tricky period. We will get through this, together.

Keep safe everyone and let's all keep being kind,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'E. Semmens' with a long, sweeping underline.

Mrs E Semmens

Head of Academy