

When you have had the biggest bombshell dropped on you and you have no idea how to start probably the hardest newsletter you have ever had to write.. turn to Dumbledore...

“Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if one only remembers to turn on the light.”

Albus Dumbledore

Dear Annan Friends

These are difficult times. The school has closed today for all but children of critical staff and vulnerable children. We said goodbye to children not sure when we will see them next. We have had to take tumultuous decisions with little time to think, let alone plan, often with conflicting advice from authorities. Staff are worried and parents are worried. We have done everything we can to explain very calmly and gently what is happening to the children so they don't feel anxious. They have coped with the cancellation of the French trip, the cancellation of The Wizard of Oz and now are being told their whole way of life will change. There have been a lot of tears (mostly from staff) but such a lot of heartfelt support from parents that we know will help us get through this very challenging time. We know we will all be separated in distance but not in spirit. We will be thinking of everyone throughout what are likely to be very demanding times over the coming weeks. Do keep us up to date with how things are for you while we aren't seeing you all in person. Drop an email for a chat. Remember as a community we are strong, we are resilient, and we will all pull together and keep the Annan light burning in our hearts until we are back together at school.



Spring Solstice

Today we held a gorgeous Gathering today at which we celebrated the Spring Solstice. Helen set up the hall with beautiful spring flowers, Gabriella dressed up as Lady Spring and we sang some beautiful spring songs. Helen read one of the stories from her book “The Children’s Forest”. We all sat together while Mark talked about unity and connectedness and how we may all be apart for the next few weeks we are all part of the Annan Family and will be connected in spirit. When the VLE is fully working after Easter, we hope to have weekly Gatherings available for everyone to join in.

Distance Learning Resource Packs

We have packs in the school office for children to use when they are working on tasks at home. Children who have been in school this week will have taken one home already. **If you don't have yours yet could you please pop by on Monday or Tuesday to collect it.**

All classes including Kindergarten have a pack. If you can't get over or arrange for someone to collect it for you, please let Paula know and we will see what we can do to get it to you.



Launch of Blick!



As the school moves into a phase of being open only to vulnerable children and children of keyworkers, the vast majority of children will be interacting with the school online from next week. For our younger children in the EYFS this will take the form of the Kindergarten and Sycamore teams putting ideas for activities on Blick!. Early Years staff also hope to upload photos and examples of things to try and activities to have a go at. They are also hoping to put on video clips of stories and music times.

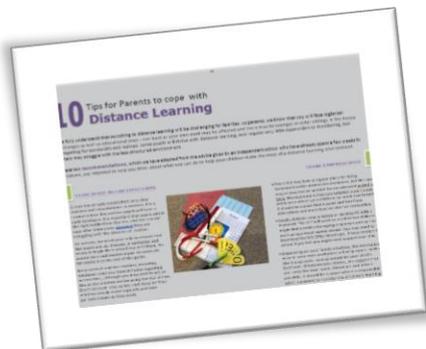
Children from Year One upwards will have more focussed activities to do around maths and literacy as well as some practical science, cooking, outdoor and games. In KS2 the learning will be more independent of parents and Alastair and Jeannette will be setting children work to have a go at as well as projects, art, science and outdoor tasks. Helen is going to plan some simple activities for each class which she might have done at Forest School and which you could do at home perhaps in the garden or park if you can go there.

We have produced a guide called “Distance learning Advice for Parents” which will give you lots of help with supporting your child at home. Ideas for how to set them up a space to work in and how to limit screen time. While children are on computers, we would remind everyone to check parental controls and keep a close eye on what children are accessing. The Distance Learning booklet does include a sample timetable and we will put these online each week for the older children. We will be proposing a timetable with a more focussed timetable in the mornings and activity-led afternoons. Children often enjoy having a structure although we do appreciate that where parents and children are sharing one computer this may be challenging. The guide should be coming out by email over the weekend ready for Monday.



We have been trialling Blick! our Virtual Learning Environment and have found that it works best on a laptop. Most features will work on a tablet, but it is trickier to use in particular if children want to upload photos or documents they have produced. Laptops also give children the ability to use a microphone and camera which will be useful if they are doing interactive tasks with the teacher. If your child does not have access to a laptop and you are unable to borrow one, please get in touch and we may be able to lend you one. A printer would also be extremely helpful to print off worksheets or activity sheets. If you don't have one these can be bought for around £30-£40 online or from shops like PC World.

Willows and Elders who were in on Friday were shown how to login and many Elders have already done this although they will be given a new individual login for the new Blick! VLE. There will be 3 times a day when children can access their teacher. Between 9am and 10am teachers will be presenting candle time and outlining the day's activities for children. They will also be available to interact with online during the day although replies may not be instant if they are helping several children at once!



Teachers are training and working on the VLE on Monday and all should be up and running to launch on Tuesday. We will be sending out login details to all families on Monday.

Please see this Monday as a day for getting yourself ready for new way of learning. There will be information of how to get ready in the guide.

We are hoping this new way of learning will be exciting and engaging. Do remember that this is a whole new learning experience for the teachers as well as the children!

Good Luck with everything and keep in touch.