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Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I do hope this letter finds you well and that you have all had a **wonderful week**. Many thanks to those of you who got in to contact with the school office to indicate that you would like your child to return in the priority year groups (**Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6**) and to those parents who answered our survey in **Years 2, 3, 4 and 5** about whether they would send their children back to school if we had capacity. Following the government's announcement, the staff and I are keen to re-assure parents that we have every confidence that we can put into place actions which can help cover the gaps of core learning and knowledge which would have arisen for all children across the school and we are already looking at a recovery curriculum for our pupils.

Through talking to parents, I believe the main concern for them at this stage in the lockdown is the **social and emotional wellbeing** of their child/children. The staff and I discussed ways to explore the possibilities of increasing interaction with children learning at home. We understand that the children are enjoying opportunities to connect with their teachers and their peers. Whilst all of our teachers are leading or supporting bubbles throughout the week we are in school time trying to maximise opportunities to connect further. I will provide more details in the next couple of weeks (I'm sounding like a politician now) but for example we are looking to see whether over the last week of term to bring in our new reception children and having socially distanced picnics / activities for Years 2 – 5 on the school field. Ideas such as these and a few more we are considering will have a **positive impact** for the children who are so keen to get back to school. Please tell your children that **they are missed** and that we are looking to do a few new things for them.

The children in school are coping extremely well within the new rules and constraints. We have another 19 children starting next week. We currently have one key worker group in operation, **any new children are able to join this if one or both parents are key workers**, please do contact the school office if your circumstances have changed. The children in this group are accessing the home learning provided by their class teachers, and having breaks and lunchtimes in their bubbles.

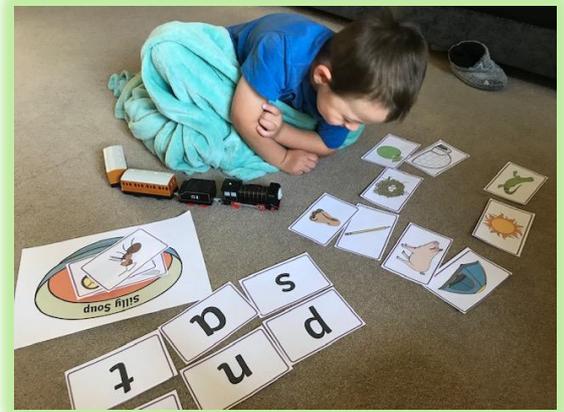
To all of you accessing the home learning, **a massive thanks for your continued efforts**. I do believe that the one-one tuition you have been giving your children will have added extra value in many ways, so please don't underestimate your time, energy and frustration to do things properly!

Finally, **a big thank you** to the parents and children currently in school who continue to observe our socially distanced measures at drop off and collection. This is most appreciated and please continue to follow these measures when off the school premises. Our measures in school seem to be working well in the first three weeks and **the children are adapting superbly to the new ways of working**. The staff have been fantastic and continue to multi-task to the best of their ability!

It's been a busy week across the Fir Tree community, as always let's have a look at what has been going on in and outside of school.

**Amazing Fir Tree Work:**

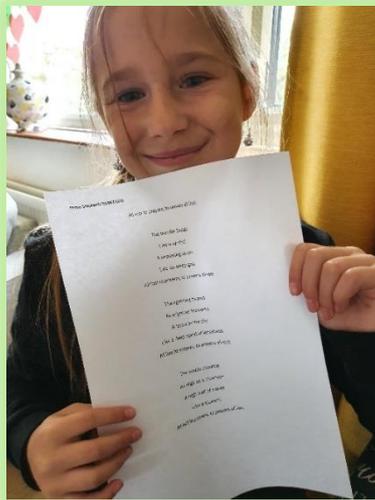
Look at the brilliant work that has been produced this week both in and out of school!!



Ellie in Year 1 had so much fun in art at school on Monday that when she came home, she made another paper sculpture called - theme park. Her brother Jack in Nursery also had fun playing a silly soup phonics game- well done to you both!



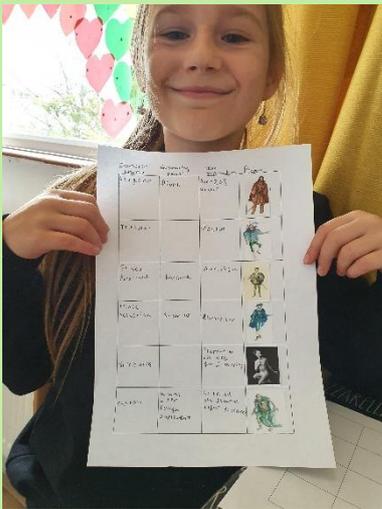
Penny in Year 4 has been working incredibly hard! She composed a super poem; created some beautiful artwork and has been unpicking the characters in The Tempest. Keep up the good work Penny!



Hassan in Reception shared his celebration of Eid, looks lovely and like good fun was had by all!

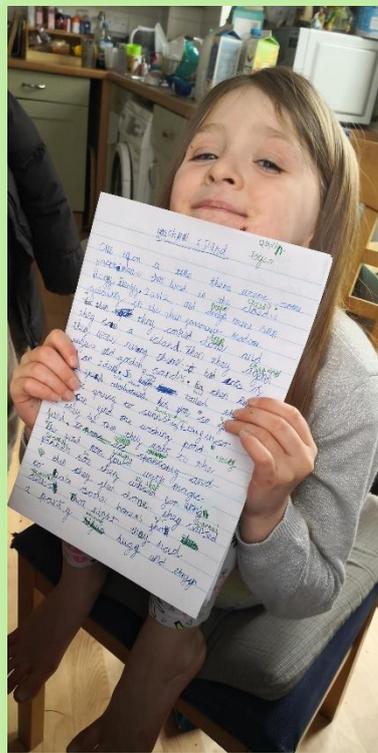


Year 1 have had great fun exploring paper art - I think they could give Matisse a run for his money! A beautiful new display in our corridor! Good job Year 1!



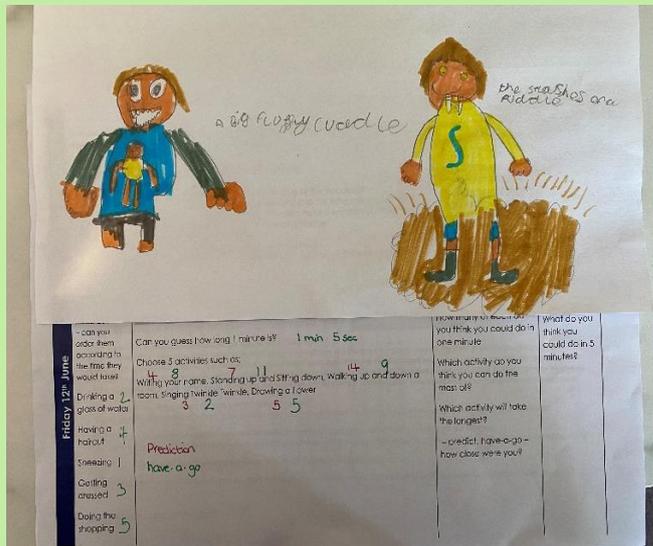
Well done to Logan in Year 3 who worked hard on a great comic strip story! It's about Doug the pug who has black fur. All the pugs with white fur are mean to him until one day they realise he is just like them just with different coloured fur. He's also mastered tying his shoelaces too - excellent Logan!

Quinn (Year 2) & Jonah (Reception) have been very busy working through their home learning. Lovely to see lots of reading and writing and fun games helping them both to learn - along with smiles too! Well done, you are both Superstars - keep it up!



Jaydon in Reception has been developing his cooking skills! He made a yummy looking pizza that turned out spectacularly. Well done Jaydon.

Rosie in Year 1 has continued her home learning on a Friday when not in school. She was working on time and thinking about time and how long a minute is. Good girl Rosie!



Year 6 have been working hard in school looking at the heart and respiratory system in Science. They produced some stunning 'Blood Artwork' and created clay models of the heart too. Well done!



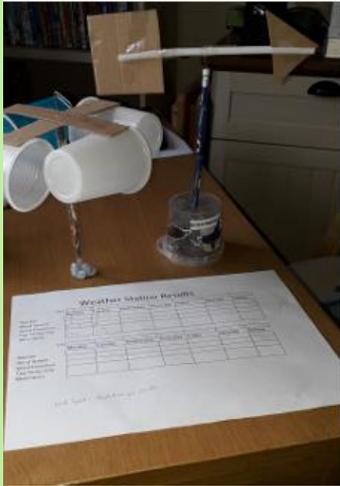
A fantastic comic strip that is beautifully presented and some great research about Fair Trade by Lola in Year 3. Good job!



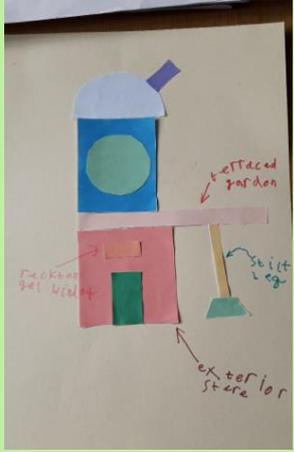
Year 6 have been revising sentence construction and focussing on vocabulary, updating their working wall!

**Fair Trade**  
 Farmers and workers don't get paid a lot of money. In some countries, they have to work in bad conditions, no direct payment, no child labor and no forced labor.  
 Fair Trades in Africa  
 Cocoa - Côte d'Ivoire - Ghana  
 Coffee - Kenya  
 Tea - East Africa  
 Cotton - Mali, Senegal and Cameroon  
 Bananas - West Africa  
 Mangoes and pineapples - Ghana  
 Shea butter - Nigeria

Finlay spent the weekend away from his Xbox he has enjoyed -reading his school book, and other books, playing Lego with his younger brother, and also went on a bike ride! And they both have new pyjamas for good behaviour!



Year 6 made paper planes and then tested their designs this week. Well Done to Michaela, her plane flew the furthest at 8 meters!



Well done to Aiden in Year 4. He has been working really hard completing all his home learning. He wrote a super poem, made a weather station and some well thought out designing too to name a few.

A huge well done to everyone working at home and in school and for sharing these – keep the photos and emails coming!!!



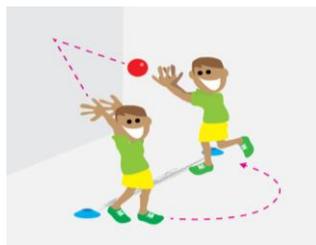
**This week's Mrs Wood Challenge:**

Can you take a **photograph of anything that shows patterns around us?** This can be naturally occurring or man-made, but humans cannot appear in your picture. There will be certificates for all entries. Please send your photo/s to [office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org](mailto:office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org) All entries will be mounted and displayed in main corridor on display. Here's a few ideas to help you!



**Real PE Challenge of the Week from Mr Hosier:**

**Physical Challenge**



**What you do:**

Work by yourself in a marked out area and come up with different ways to send and receive a ball against a wall.

Use the ideas below to make the activity more or less challenging depending on how you're finding it:



**Thought for the weekend / Wellbeing: Mindfulness**



### **But how can this help me?**

At the moment you may be feeling sad, angry, anxious, worried or stressed.

It's really easy to stop noticing what's going on around us. It's also easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling, we can get caught up in our thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are driving our emotions and behaviour.

Mindfulness can benefit you by decreasing stress and sadness whilst increasing levels of focus and happiness.

### **How can I practise mindfulness?**

Close your eyes and take a deep breath and release it slowly.....How do you feel now?

- **Squeeze Muscles:** Starting at your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tight. Count to five. Release, and notice how your body changes. Repeat exercise moving up your body.
- **Belly Breathing:** Put one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Slowly breathe in from your stomach (expand like a balloon) and slowly breathe out (deflate).
- **Mindful Meal:** Pay attention to the smell, taste and look of your food. No multitasking.
- **Meditation:** Sit in a relaxed, comfortable position. Pick something to focus on, like your breath. When your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your breath.
- **Blowing Bubbles:** Notice their shapes, textures and colours
- **Colouring:** Colour something. Focus on the colours and designs. (attachment to this letter)
- **Listening to Music:** Focus on the whole song, or listen specifically to the voice or an instrument.

Have a lovely weekend, hopefully with the sun returning, and enjoy Father's Day!

Best wishes



Mrs L Wood  
**Associate Headteacher**