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29th January 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,



Here we are at the end of week 5 and the Prime Minister has announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools from Monday 8th March.

If the Government achieves its target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15th February then those groups will have developed immunity from the virus around three weeks later, that is by 8th March. It is for this reason that they hope it will therefore be safe to commence the reopening of schools from Monday 8th March.

However this looks, it will certainly be a relief to so many to return to some kind of normality and a date to work towards; I know that a route map will be shared with us by the government in due course. Thank you to you all and to the staff for the work that you are doing. You are amazing! We know this makes planning difficult for everyone but as always you can be sure that the decisions we make at Fir Tree are made with the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and children at the centre.

School will not be open during February half term and no work will be set, this will ensure that everyone can reset and have rest from all the hard work taking place. Fir Tree will remain open to Nursery, vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers after February half-term, as we are now. All other pupils will continue to receive high quality remote education at home. This is in line with the wider national lockdown measures to help minimise the spread of the virus and respond quickly to the new variants.

Times are tough for us all at the moment – our mental health is taking a battering. Everyone's circumstances are different and we appreciate that. We do however have a duty of care to our children and that is the main reason that you may get a telephone call from a teacher or member of the leadership team. Please answer your phone or respond to messages – we will keep calling you to check that your child is ok.

Whatever your personal circumstances are – we think you are doing a great job. If your child stays in their pjs until noon, has eaten one too many microwave meals than you'd like or is spending more time than usual watching tv... that's ok, we are in a third national lockdown! Try and get back to a normal routine as soon as you can. We know our children are safe, loved and cared for and this is the most important thing at present.

We have high expectations at Fir Tree and the work we are setting reflects this. All we ask is that you do your best. As I have said before, we do expect engagement, if you manage all of the work set, fantastic, equally if it's just one activity each day that's ok too.

Please don't panic when we eventually find out the plan for all children to return to school – I think we all know this may not be soon? Also, do not over worry when you hear the 'falling behind' narrative that will get louder as time goes on. Every pupil in the country is affected by this and we, like all schools will do our absolute best once our school community is restored.

As we saw in September, your children are resilient. Our job together is to keep them engaged and interested in learning.



I was reminded this week of the 5 elements (to the left) which are the key to happy and healthy lives. As lockdown continues we will once again regularly post new resources and links as they arise which may be of benefit to you and your family. You can also find many supporting websites, resources and activities on our school website to help you also.

At Fir Tree we will be shining a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health, by participating in **Children's Mental Health Week**, which starts on Monday 1st February 2021, with the theme of '**Express Yourself**'.



Expressing yourself is about finding ways to share feelings, and thoughts or ideas, through creativity. This could be through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that make you feel good. **Next week you will all be given a well-being challenge each day to complete.** When you complete your challenge make sure you share a picture with your class teacher, as I know they LOVE seeing all your work. Next Friday will be a **non-screen day of learning** for all, to support the wellbeing of you and your parents – keep an eye out for instructions on TEAMS next week!

It's important to remember that being able to express yourself is not about being the best at something or putting on a performance for others. It is about finding a way to show **who you are**, and **how you see the world**, that can **help you feel good about yourself**.

Please have a **FUN** and **HAPPY** week, remember your parents, carers and **ALL** the staff at Fir Tree always have **YOUR** well-being as their first priority. *Miss Burton*

Please may I remind parents to inform the school office if a child is showing symptoms and is being booked in for a test. This includes weekends where e-mails will still be checked on a regular basis. Can we remind parents that the Government advice is that parents and carers should continue to keep their children at home if they can.



Following any positive test result, Public Health England are contacted and discuss with myself the required actions for potential isolation of individuals and bubbles. Unfortunately, Public Health England are very busy and there is no guarantee I will be able to speak to an authorised person immediately, particularly in the evenings or at weekends. In such situations, the school has to make precautionary decisions until Public Health England clarification can be given. As always, **if your e-mail or phone numbers change please inform the school office** as we will be contacting you through these channels in such situations.

Next week I'd like to invite each child to attend a short meeting where I will catch up with them, talk about what they have done and then allow them the opportunity to ask any questions and/or tell each other some jokes. It would be lovely to have some interaction with the children and entertainment! You will be emailed a zoom link for Reception on the morning of the session, and all other sessions will be on TEAMS:

Reception	Monday 1 st February 2020	2pm
Year 1	Monday 1 st February 2020	2:30pm
Year 2	Tuesday 2 nd February 2020	2pm
Year 3	Tuesday 2 nd February 2020	2:30pm
Year 4	Wednesday 3 rd February 2020	1:30pm
Year 5	Wednesday 3 rd February 2020	2:15pm
Year 6	Thursday 4 th February 2020	1:30pm



I'm looking forward to these and seeing the children. I have been so impressed with their hard work and interaction. A special shout out to Tushar and Ethan in Year 6 and Heath and Abbey in Year 2 who all responded to my challenge in last week's celebration assembly and sent me lots of information and facts about 'Burns Night' – well done you 4!!



Also Treezy would like to say thank you for the notes and pictures he has received from you after I told you in assembly how much he was missing you!

With that in mind please let me share some fantastic work in addition to those who we celebrated in assembly this morning.

This week:



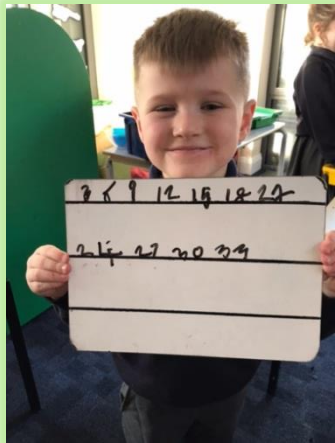
Ellie in Year 2 has been working really hard in Literacy. As part of Year 2's experience day she found out lots about bakeries – well done Ellie!

Monday 25th January 2022
 A baker bakes
 donuts, cakes, breads, biscuits, bread,
 pastries, pizza, sausage roll and
 pasties. A baker has to wake up very
 early to make the bread and
 other yummy food. A baker might
 have help from other bakers in
 the shop.
Smells of the bakery
 Smells delicious
 cakes – smell sweet
 bread – smell freshly baked
 pizza – smell the cheese
 tarts and pasties
 bread – soft, crust is hard, not dry
 toast – taste fresh
 bread sticks – crunchy, hard as a
 crunchy carrot, ginger bread – hard,
 crumbly, crunchy, taste spicy.
 Gâteau – can smell chocolate and
 bread, squishy, can taste toast
 chocolate, sticky, soft.
 cake – chocolate, sweet the top is harder
 than the middle, crumbly a bit sticky.
 pizza – a little bit crunchy and soft
 cheesy hot taste, a bit like bread.

Abbey and Rosie in Year 2 have been working practically on sharing in their Maths work – super girls!



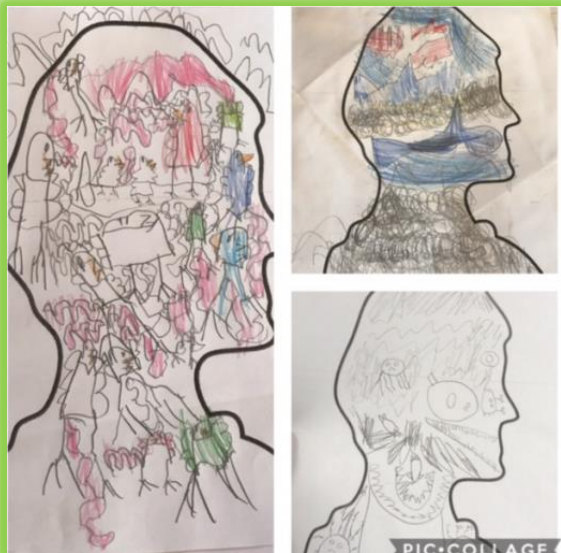
Eva in Year 2 shared her birthday cake with us – nom nom! Belated birthday wishes Eva!



Finlay in Year 2 has been really keen to keep practising counting in threes – good job!

Eryk in Year 6 produced some fantastic writing for Mrs Purcell with outstanding vocab choices, building up suspense superbly!

Once inside, he placed the amulet onto the counter. His eyes were drawn to the guttural, crimson red which illuminated like blood dripping from a gushing cut. Abanazer's beady eyes bulged his serpent scaled lips distorted into a sneering smile, uncovering deteriorating teeth like precious jewels. His insipid skin, which was stretched tight over his face like a skull, was puckered with years of disappointment and dishonesty.



Harry, Mohamad and Reuben in Year 3 recreated 'The Last Supper' for RE using their toys. Brilliant!



Rosie, Samuel and Molly wowed Miss Crewe in Art, recreating Guiseppe's portraits of elements – I believe all used water, well done all of you!



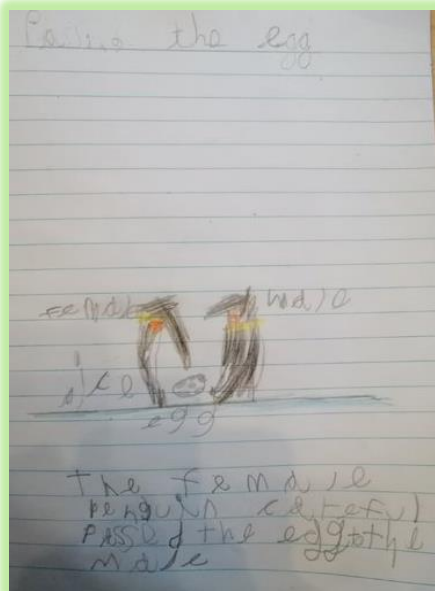
Mrs Hayton was really impressed with Hassan's and Kenzie's Andy Goldsworthy spirals in Art – well done boys!



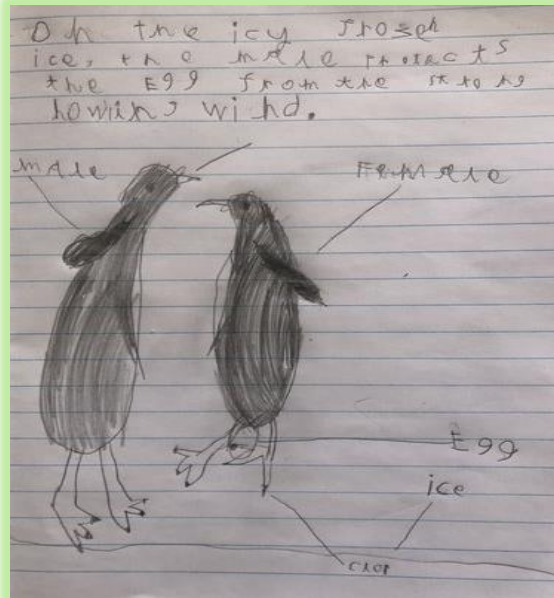
Quinn in Year 3 created a super volcano experiment as part of the new class topic – looks messy Quinn!

Bella in Year 1 has been practising her spellings in a very creative way – excellent Bella!





Super Literacy in Year 1 from Jonah and Summer clearly learning lots about penguins- fantastic!



Great work from Ludwik in Reception finding different ways to make 7 on a domino, you look really pleased with yourself!



Anan in Reception has been finding ways to make 8 on the ladybird, good work Anan!



Lily from Reception has been reading tricky words on her magic mirror; I need one of these Lily!



How creative! Jenny in Reception has been playing hopscotch to practise her phonics - great fun!



Well done to Poppy and Millie in Year 5 who produced stunning flowers in Art this week - simply beautiful girls!

Penelope really enjoyed making her volcano eruption this week at home with Mum - looks really life like too!



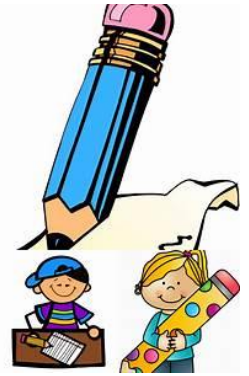
Well done to **all** the children for uploading and sharing your work on TEAMS; I cannot wait to see and share more next week!!!

CHALLENGE

Thank you to those who shared their challenges last week. I really enjoyed reading your A-Z alphabets linked to school. Some brought back memories when I was a pupil myself!!

The Drawing Challenge

This week's challenge is a fun one! I would like you to place a book on top of your head and then a piece of paper. Draw a picture of a rabbit – the best rabbit wins!!! I'm looking forward to seeing your drawing skills from a height, entries welcome from staff and parents too.



Good luck everyone!! Please email entries to office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org



Lockdown lunches and meal plans

Change4Life have created recipes and shopping lists for families which can be used to create lunches for around £15 each week.

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/lunch/cheap-lockdown-lunch-ideas>

This lockdown will end and when it does we will get back to our core business, but now we can all only do the best we can. We are in this together, there will be good days and bad, just take each one as it comes.

Have a good weekend and thank you for your continued support.

Stay safe!

Best Wishes

Mrs L Wood
Associate Headteacher



7 Top Tips to Support Reading at Home

Shared reading is a great way to develop children's language and communication and to boost their reading skills. Regular reading routines can offer lots of opportunities for learning during school closures.

- 1 Concentrate on reading quality (it isn't all about reading lots!)**



Don't worry too much about the 'what' and 'how' of reading each day. Books are great—but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Following a recipe to make some cupcakes is valuable reading. Be on the lookout for reading, wherever it is!

- 2 Ask your child lots of questions**



All reading matters. Shared reading is about 'reading with', not just 'reading to' (even for older children). So, ask lots of 'Wh' questions, such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? Try them when talking about books: for example, 'what do you think Harry is feeling?'

- 3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they have read**



If it is a book, look at the front cover—or the last chapter—and talk about what might happen next. Look for clues in the book and be a reading detective! For example, 'can you see the bear on the front cover? Where do you think he will go?'

- 4 Ask your child to summarise what they have read**



When you've finished reading, talk about what happened. Acting out the things that happened in the story or describing the big idea of a chapter is really fun and maximises learning. For example, 'can you remember all the things that happened on the bear hunt?'

- 5 Ask your child to write about what they have read**



Write, or draw pictures, from anything you've read! Big writing and pictures are even more fun. For example, use an old roll of wallpaper to make a treasure map with clues from the stories you've read together.

- 6 Read and discuss reading with friends or family**



Make books a part of the family. Encourage your child to share them with a relative or friend, over a video call. Laugh about them when you are making meals together. For example, 'I hope the tiger doesn't come to tea today!'

- 7 Maintain the motivation to read**



Talk about the joy of reading whenever you can. Your child is on an amazing journey to becoming a reader. Put them in the driving seat and have fun on the way! For example, 'choose your favourite story for bedtime tonight.'