

Today marks the end of a term that has been unlike anything any of us have ever experienced!

I would like to thank you as parents for your ongoing support and good wishes through this challenging season and to commend you for all that you are doing as parents in this most unusual of times.

I know that many of you will have wrestled over recent days with the decision as to whether or not to send your child into school if they can be offered a place. I would like to assure you that we recognise that every family has different circumstances and respect the individual decisions that you have made. Like you, our primary concern is that your children are safe and well.

Attached are a number of documents that, if your child is returning to school, you will find helpful. If your child is not returning there is also some information about home learning, which I would encourage you to read.

I will be in touch again at the end of next week, following the anticipated government announcement regarding school's re-opening. Tim Edwards-Grundy

Following the release of adults singing a blessing over the UK, [children](#) have now recorded their version. You may have listened to it as part of this morning's collective worship, do enjoy listening to it again.

You may find it helpful to use the words of the blessing with your children, at the close of each day - "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you, the Lord be gracious to you and give you his peace."

This week the Bishop of Oxford recorded a very special [Collective Worship](#) on the theme of 'Courage'. At the end of the recording the Bishop invites children to create something, which represents courage and helps them to be strong and have a big heart. The Bishop would love to see photos of what children have created, so please do send them to the [dropbox link](#) and send a copy in to the school office as well.

The members of St Mary's Cogges continue to pray for their local community. If you have any prayer requests, please do email them to prayer@coggesparish.com.

This week we asked Miss Hallowell, who teaches in Year 5, about her experience of being at home in the lockdown.

What are you finding hardest about being at home?

I have been really missing my family and friends. I have had a big birthday during lockdown and a couple of weeks later my brother got engaged – it has been tough not being able to celebrate either of these!

What is the best thing you have done now that you are not in school?

I moved into a new house just before lockdown so I've been enjoying settling in, attempting DIY, meeting new neighbours and keeping my new lawn alive!

I've also been doing lots of baking!

What message do you want to give to the children who are at home?

Big shout out to my class – I really miss seeing them every day!

The most important thing to us is that you are safe and happy! Don't panic if you haven't managed to do all your home learning, or if you have had some gloomy days.

Keep looking after yourselves and being kind and patient with those you live with. This won't last for ever!



Where can we go during the lockdown?

This weekend how about a trip under water? Why not visit the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#)? The Aquarium has lots of live and recorded webcams enabling you to watch jelly fish, penguins, tropical fish, sardines and leopard sharks. There are also cameras on the bay so you can watch otters, birds and boats.

This week has been mental health week. At this time of unprecedented challenge, it is especially important to look after your mental health.

With all of the day to day challenges, protecting your own mental health can feel like just another thing to fit in, but it really is essential.

There are lots of resources available to help you think about ways to protect your mental health – a quick Google search will bring up lots of good ideas, including some provided by the NHS.

The [Church of England](#) has produced a series of seven podcasts, which are now available to listen to at any time.

Over half term you may also like to take some time to complete some [mental health awareness](#) activities with your children.

During this time of lockdown the Girlguiding association is producing regular ideas of activities that children across the primary age range can participate in.

You can find [activities](#) for children aged 4 – 7, including chattering teeth and growing cups of kindness.

You can find [activities](#) for children aged 7 – 10, including exploring emojis and finding your fluids.

This Saturday, why not join Girl Guides everywhere for an [online festival](#) of activities and music?

If you have any safeguarding concerns you can still report these to Tim Edwards-Grundy the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). You can contact him on head.3600@blake.oxon.sch.uk.

Over the half-term, do take some time to talk to your children about internet safety and how to stay safe online. There is lots of [useful information](#) available to help you navigate this very challenging area and to ensure your children are well informed.

The Tokyo 2020 Games may not be happening this year, but you can still get active, stay connected and win prizes with [Travel to Tokyo](#), Team GB and Paralympics GB's official, free programme for children aged 5 – 11 and their families.

The site has a whole raft of resources that you can use as part of your children's home learning, or simply to enjoy together as a family.

You can learn more about the Games, find activities to keep fit or explore determination and courage in sport.

During Collective Worship this morning Mrs Laithwaite reminded us all to count our blessings.

Whatever our current circumstances, we all have things for which we can be grateful. Take some time this week to think of the people and things that are a blessing to you and to be grateful for them.

If you are especially grateful for the blessing that a person is to you, make time this week to tell them how you feel.

Don't forget also, within your homes, to be a blessing to each other! Maybe you can think of a way to bless someone you love this week.

This weekend you have the opportunity to join in with a couple of well-known events, that owing to the lockdown are this year online.

Whether you enjoy flowers, books or both, join the last few days of the [Hay festival](#) and the [Chelsea flower show](#).