

Well, what a time to have 'Patience' as the value of the month!

Thank you all for your patience as we begin to plan for the wider opening of the school. You will, I know, have many questions about the practicalities of this and what school may look like for those children who come back after half-term. We will endeavour to answer as many of your questions, as quickly and as fully as we can and thank you in advance for your patience as you wait to hear further details from us.

If you have not yet done so, please do help us as we start to plan, by completing the [online form](#).

As part of a family of schools, ODST schools seek to work together and support one another whenever they can. At this time when there are so many decisions to be taken and preparations to be made, Mrs Claire Doland is supporting the staff team at St Mary's Infant School, whilst their headteacher takes a period of compassionate leave. I am delighted that we are able to support the staff there in this way.

Tim Edwards-Grundy

Church buildings may be closed but the church is very much alive.

If you are experiencing problems with money, or debt at this time [Christians Against Poverty](#) is an organisation set up to help. CAP works with local churches to provide debt counselling, practical support and release from debt.

CAP recognises that poverty and debt destroys lives, and is not prepared to sit back and do nothing. CAP has a wide range of services to help – simply go to their website, click on 'I want help', enter your postcode and you can find out more.

If you want to join in with a church service, you can search '[A Church Near You](#)' and find what different churches are sharing online.

You may also find it helpful to read or listen to the Church of England's [daily prayer](#).

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 Mr Morris, who works as a Teaching Assistant, about his experience of being at home in the lockdown.

What are you finding hardest about being at home?

For me, the most difficult thing has been not being able to see my parents and my sister's family. Football on the radio is another thing I have missed and of course I have missed school!

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

I have spent loads of time with my family, which has been great. My son, Will, has been home from University and it has been wonderful to have him around the house.

I've had plenty of time for reading and I've done quite a lot of drawing.

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

Children, I miss you all so much, you're such an important part of my life. I hope you are all happy and safe.

Please help your adults by making all those good choices that I know you normally make and remember all those values that we try to observe at The Blake.

You could use this time to do what I think is the most important thing to help with your learning and that is reading. Read anything you like – just read!

Remember you are special – because you are you!



Where can we go during the lockdown?

This weekend how about a trip to Northern Ireland and the [Giant's Causeway](#)? Whilst you are there why not also tour Aird Snout (up on the headland), Port Noffer (just beyond the causeway) and enjoy looking out to sea? With panoramic views and sound effects, you can open the windows, set up a picnic and imagine you have escaped to another place!

With so much contact with family and friends now being done virtually why not try some of the ideas from [5 minute fun](#) to do together across the miles?

If you want something to get everyone moving, why not try a scavenger hunt? Get everyone into teams, decide on team names and then start the game...

Team members must race to find...

Something that begins with the same letter as your name

A pair of something

Something that keeps you warm

Something that is one of the colours of the rainbow

An object that is stripy...

Why not take Mr Morris' advice and find something that you enjoy reading this weekend? Try and see how many different types of things you could read this weekend, newspapers, food containers, books, instructions...how many different things can you find?

If you want to take a break from reading but don't want to take a break from books, let the [British Library](#) help you discover more.

Their website also has advice on how to draw a Gruffalo (apparently you start with the horns), how to create a talking animal and how to make a miniature book.

Whilst the Sea Cadets are not able to meet, they have produced lots of activities to try at home.

Why not try your hand at some [knot tying](#)? Have a go at a clove hitch, a bowline, a sheet bend and an Ashley stopper knot – all you need is a piece of wool, string or a shoelace and some patience!

You could also [test your knowledge](#) of all things science and engineering – there are different quizzes for different ages, so everyone in your home can join in.

You can then relax and watch a Sea Cadet talking about their [engineering team](#).

Staying at home can cause challenges for many. #YouAreNotAlone is a new campaign to show solidarity and support for victims of abuse. Find out more about the campaign and where you can get help by reading the partner pack.

If you have any concerns about the challenges that you are facing at this time and would value some support or advice, please do contact [Judith Ledden](#) our Home School Key Worker.

Judith will be happy to listen to your concerns and can also help you source practical or professional support. Call or text Judith on 07864 814818.

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.

If your children want to talk to someone outside of their family, they can contact their class teacher or [Childline](#) on 0800 1111.

Anyone can use the MASH referral number (0345 050 7666) if they have concerns for the wellbeing of someone else.

The government has now changed advice and it is possible to go outdoors and exercise as much as you like!

Take a look at the '[Change 4 life](#)' activities, including a number of ten minute '*Shake Ups*' for some good ideas of how to keep your children active inside and outside.