



14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear children,

I hope you are all staying safe and keeping well. It is very strange in school without you all here. It is quiet and it all still feels unreal to me. I know from your class teachers that you are being kept very busy with your home learning, and some of you have sent emails and cards in to school with little updates. They make us smile – thank you. Your teachers tell me that you are all being really sensible at this time and are doing what is asked of you by us and by your parents. Keep this up; it makes us all very proud. I know that for some of you, things are even more difficult right now because it is Ramadan and your families are observing a fast – that can't be easy!

I hope you all enjoyed our recent video. I am sure Taylor Swift would be very impressed with the improvements we made to her song! I think a few of the teachers thought I was joking when I suggested that we did some singing. Some were very nervous, but they managed the impulse to say no, and persisted, listening with understanding and empathy to the lyrics (I hope you all see what I did there!).

Haven't we been lucky with the weather?! I hope that as well as doing the activities that we set for you, you have been making the most of the sunshine by going for walks with your family, playing outside in the garden, having barbecues, building camps and finding various other ways to amuse yourselves. I wanted to put a tent up in my garden for the bank holiday weekend and pretend we were away camping, but Mr Jordan was being a spoil sport!

Hopefully you are using some of this time to try new things and learn some new skills. Maybe you've been helping your parents to prepare meals, or doing jobs in the garden. I was hoping to do all sorts but have been very busy with school and haven't had much time, especially as I do love to read and had lots of books sat waiting to be read. I have learned a few new things though: I am mastering the 'Savage' dance on Tiktok (part of the fun of having teenaged daughters); I worked out how to produce an online survey for your parents to complete; I have discovered that doing jigsaws is surprisingly enjoyable! But I have also learned something much more important than any of that: just how fantastic your teachers and teaching assistants are (and the rest of the staff too)! I talk to lots of other Head Teachers and it makes me realise how lucky we are here at Thorns. Everyone is working really hard to ensure that you have access to learning at home. They put a lot of thought and effort into what they ask you to do. I know from the early-morning and late-night text messages, that their brains rarely switch off, and some of them are very good at thinking of things I may not, and of making sure I am updated with any new documents or news (Year 6, it won't come as a surprise to you that Mrs Rees is particularly good at this). Mrs Cartwright, in the meantime, just doesn't seem to sleep at all – staying up past midnight sorting out problems with school meal vouchers and doing various other things that go on 'behind the scenes', and Mrs Bennett can't keep away whether she's on the rota or not! It has been a surprisingly busy time, despite most of you not being here. I also know how much everyone is missing you all and looking forward to seeing you back in school – but only when we know it is safe.

You may be aware that the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has announced that he would like schools to start welcoming some of you back in quite soon. I am thinking very hard about how we will do this, and I have been asking your parents for their views. Don't worry, if and when you do come back, we will make sure that it is safe for you to be in school and to the best of our ability will put special measures in place to protect you (and the staff). At the moment we don't know exactly when you will be expected back, or what this will look like, but we will let your parents know when we know more ourselves. Of course you will be missing your friends (maybe even your teachers too!) but think how much fun it will be to finally catch up (although it will be quite a while before school fully returns to the way it was before – and that's okay; we'll get there in the end).

Until such times as we see you again, continue to follow the rules and stay safe. Remember, as I have said before, you are living through a period that will be talked about for many years to come: you will one day be a source of historical information so try and see the positives and enjoy this time; take it all in because one day we will be asking ourselves if it was all a weird dream or did it really happen!

Take care of yourselves and remember, even though you're not in school, we still want you to be **SAFE, HAPPY and LEARNING.**

*Mrs Jordan*

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