

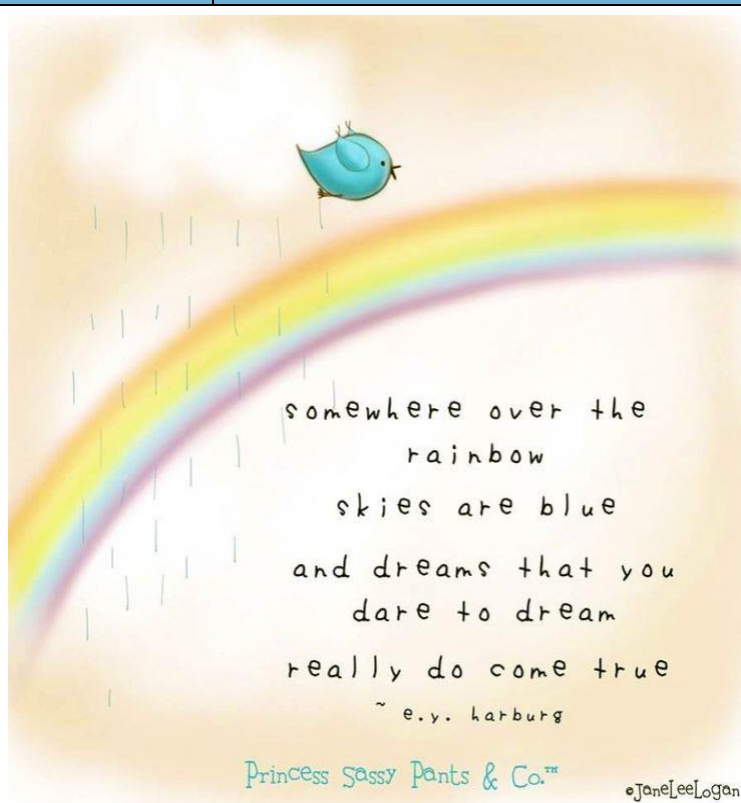
I hope that you all continue to stay safe and well. It seems hard to believe that school has now been closed for 13 weeks and everyone has established a new 'normal'. I am sure you will have of course established routines at home and within your lives which helped you to adjust to the 'new normal' as without routines we as humans tend not to do very well... I am personally someone who likes structure and routine and quickly had to make a new one for myself and my family. We are now hearing about the Government's proposals for how to ease the Lockdown slowly. It appears that the country has moved on significantly in terms of easing the Lockdown and attempting to get things 'back to normal' - although I think our understanding of what normal is will be very different to what we once knew. We need to adapt to a new way of living whilst the threat of COVID 19 is present. It is plain to see that more people are out, more shops are opening, traffic on the road has increased. It is however with a heavy heart that we realise that this is an ongoing situation and not one that is going away anytime soon - until a vaccine is found COVID will be present within the community and the wider world.

I am aware too that Lockdown has had a number of positive effects and it is important that we take time to recognise these in amongst the harm it has caused. Families have had an opportunity to re-connect with each other, they have had TIME with each other and for many of us before this, time was something which was in very short supply. We have been able to have longer conversations with each other and do things together that time simply didn't allow for before. The environment and nature in particular has flourished in the absence of cars, the massive drop in pollution and of course less people moving around the cities and interfering. You must have noticed how loudly the birds have been singing, how vibrant the blossom trees are and how blue the sky has become? This gives us a taste of what we really can do to help heal our environment - as we are called to in Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si' where he calls us to be stewards of God's world.

Being in school continues to be a strange experience with a skeleton staff and very few children, even though it has been a delight to hear from all our families and see the children's work being shared via SEESAW. Thank you to all those parents who have taken the time to comment on their child's reports. Your feedback is very important to us.

It is with mixed emotions that we continue to prepare for the partial reopening of school. We are naturally looking forward to welcome some more children back into school on Monday but sad that we can't all be back together. Rest assured that even if we aren't open for you, we are still here via SEESAW, email and phone.

And so gradually as lockdown eases, now is the time to be positive about the future for our children - whether they are back before the summer or in September there will be new and exciting times ahead. Our children may well be feeling anxious about school - whether they are returning or not - and it is important that they hear positive messages from home and school about what the future holds for them and their



friends. In a few weeks I will send out a letter explaining who your child's class teacher will be in September and as our normal transition arrangements will not happen, they will be in touch to introduce themselves. I am very proud of everyone involved with our school for the way that we have navigated our way through these uncharted waters and think that we should all reflect on how well we have coped so far. St Michael's community truly is stronger when working together.



PHASED REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

I want to thank you again for your patience in what has been a very turbulent time for schools. When I wrote last week's newsletter our plan was that the Year 6 children whose parents wanted them to return would do so on Monday 8th June. However, by Friday evening, I had received information from the Local Authority informing us that the R Rate (infection rate) in the North West was higher than in other parts of the country and this meant we reviewed our plans. We all want our children back in school, but we can only do this when we know it is safe to do so for the pupils, their families and the staff.

The Government this week stated that they no longer expected school's to open to more year groups beyond Reception, Year 1

and Year 6 and as we are getting closer towards the end of the term, I have to admit that it is highly unlikely that we will open to any further year groups but as always we will continue to keep you posted.

In light of further information this week, we now propose to open to Year 6 on Monday. We sincerely hope we do not need to change these plans again.

Our new PHASED PLAN for the Reopening of School is as follows:

PHASE 2 – WEEK BEGINNING 15th JUNE – We hope to be able to partially open school for Year 6 children whose parents wish for them to attend school.

PHASE 3 – WEEK BEGINNING 22nd JUNE – We hope to be able to partially open school for F2 children whose parents wish for them to attend school.

PHASE 4 – WEEK BEGINNING 29th JUNE – We hope to be able to partially open school for Year 1 children whose parents wish for them to attend school.

ALL OF THE ABOVE IS STILL SUBJECT TO CHANGE IF WE RECEIVE FURTHER GOVERNMENT OR LOCAL AUTHORITY GUIDANCE.

Summer Reading Challenge

Children aged 4–11 can sign up at <https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/> for this year's exciting Summer Reading Challenge, which was launched this week and will run until September.

Children taking part in the Challenge will join the Silly Squad, an adventurous team of animals who love to have a laugh and get enjoyment out of all kinds of funny books, celebrating happiness and laughter, that will build children's skills and confidence.

This year, due to COVID-19, the Challenge is being delivered online, with the support of public libraries using virtual services and e-lending platforms, to keep children reading over the summer. It is free to join and includes games and quizzes, as well as digital and downloadable activities to encourage children and their families to take part in reading related activities at home.



Last Sunday was 'Trinity Sunday'. The Trinity is a **very special way in which God shows His love for us** - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is one of the richest concepts to help us grow in relationship with God, but it is also one of the most difficult to understand.

Saint Patrick used a shamrock (a three leafed clover) to help people understand the Trinity. Although it is one plant, it has three separate leaves but one stem. So the Trinity is three separate parts to the same centre.

The Trinity - Father, Son and Spirit - is a **community of love**. **They love one another, and they love us** very, very much. We were made in the image of God, which means **we were created to love God and love one another!**



Mental Health and Well-Being

I know a number of families have contacted teachers, worried about how to support their child's mental health. Please look at the 'Mental Health' page on our website as you will find links to lots of useful websites as well stories linked to the current COVID 19 crisis which have been specifically written to be shared with children who are worried, anxious or asking questions about what is happening. We have uploaded new resources this week and lots of useful stories that you can share with your child at home.

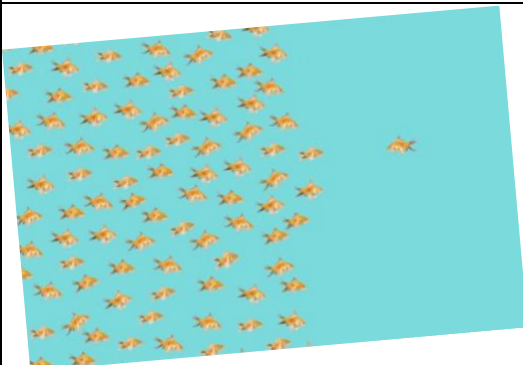
The current situation in which some children are going back to school and some are not may be a cause of stress for some members of the family. We have a few tips below, which we hope will be helpful.

For children: In anxious moments this clip on breathing from GoNoodle can be a wonderful way to calm down (3 mins 37 secs): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTzXFPh6CPI>

For families: Finish the sentence game. The whole family can take it in turns to finish this sentence: "When I'm worried I..." Share ideas that help you calm down when feeling anxious or worried. Try not to judge each other's responses. This is a wonderful game because it helps build resilience which is our value of the month and creates a wonderful connecting moment where everyone feels valued in what they have to share. You could play a few rounds of this game.

Our VALUE for JUNE is RESILIENCE.

Can you find any images or photos on the internet that show resilience? Here are some examples.



Stay safe and PLEASE take care. Mrs Ralph