



**March 20th 2020 Issue 24**

This week has been a testing time for all of us in school, as I am sure it has been for you in your organisations and every day life. We have been following advice from Public Health England and our Local Authority at every step and making sure that life in school has ran as smoothly as possible. This has not been easy with the limited or ambiguous information that has been given to us. I would like to thank all of the staff who have helped teach, cover breaks, lunches, after school care and cleaning in this difficult period which has been made more challenging as staff self-isolate or have ill family members. We are very lucky to have such a staff and many of us will be here over the coming weeks to support eligible families.

There was a delay in releasing information about the key workers and the following is taken from the DFE directive. 'The government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open for those children that absolutely need to attend...every child who can be cared for safely at home, should be. If it is at all possible that a child can be at home, then they should be. Therefore, if a parent is in the key worker group but can arrange safe childcare other than school they should do this. This is to ensure that we protect those workers who are in critical roles from infection as far as possible.'

For the parents who are eligible, I have sent an additional letter home to clarify times and days you wish your child to attend.

The latest information that we have been given is that if your child is entitled to free school meals then we are to provide packed lunches which can be picked up from the school at 12 noon. We believe that in the future this will be replaced by supermarket vouchers but this information and system is still to be finalised.

I asked teachers to be prepare work to give to children should the need arise. This week Mrs Newton uploaded work for each class that should keep your child busy until Easter. Work can be accessed by visiting <http://www.montalbo.durham.sch.uk/parents/home-learning/>

We recognise that not all children will have access to the internet or printers so have also sent home hard copies of work that children can work through at home. We will continue to review and add to what we have created over the coming weeks. The work that you have been sent home plus the work online should keep your child going until Easter. If your child is still attending school, there is no need for them to do this work unless you really want to!

Remember, there a lots of things of interest to children outside which have many benefits such as a walk in the woods while we still can. Children need a balance of screen time and 'green time'.

If you are inside for prolonged periods, chanting and learning times tables, reading books, writing stories, drawing, lego and junk modelling are all beneficial and good fun!

### **Best wishes to you all**

It is hard to believe that this is the last newsletter for the foreseeable future . Hopefully, we will not have said goodbye to our Year 6s but if we have then we wish them all the very best for their next steps, knowing that their confidence has grown, friendships have strengthened and that they will be ready for the challenges ahead. All of the staff are very emotional about the fact that they will not see their class progress and that the children will miss out on an extended period of normal schooling, with all of the wonderful experiences that entails.

However, we must look forward and try and be as positive as possible, knowing that there will be an end to this uncertain period and perhaps communities will be stronger for it. So for now, look after each other, try and remain calm and enjoy being together.

From all of us at Montalbo, we wish you all the very best.

Mr C Minikin  
Headteacher