



Truro School Prep
Hightertown
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 3QN

Dear Parents,

My end of term letters are usually buoyant and full of news about the exciting end of term events that your children have experienced, but we find ourselves in very different times as we head into this year's Easter break.

The term has, until quite recently, been full of life and the usual hive of activity; we have had our fair share of work and play; progress and learning; trips and fixtures, but as the weeks have gone on, it has been clear that something significant was happening and we have been rapidly preparing and getting ourselves ready for the current situation.

Back in 2010, when I was living in Chile, I experienced the sixth biggest earthquake in recorded history; it took place the week before we were due to start the academic year and we had to set to emergency planning, moving rooms, changing timetables and attempting to get things ready to receive the children. This resulted in putting the start of year back a week and I remember thinking that I could never experience something so stressful again in my teaching career. Never, say never...

However, it is still hugely important to focus on all that the children have been involved in and how much has been worth celebrating. We had a fabulous day back in January when all Pre-Prep – from Nursery to Year 2 – went to the Eden Project for the day, visiting the biomes and playing on the ice-rink. The image of the children pulling each other around on sledges and 'skating' their way across the ice was one of the highlights of the winter for me. Pre-Prep have been very scientific this term, too, with first Nursery and then Year 2 (who went over to Truro School) taking part in chemistry workshops. Thankfully, they didn't blow anything up and everyone loved the activities involved.

Children in Years 5 and 6 have also been taking part in Chemistry Club over at the senior school; Dr Brogden (Head of Chemistry at Truro School and one of our Nursery parents) has been organising some amazing experiments for our children with her chemistry team. So far, they have enjoyed Bunsen Burner Licence; Salt and Sand Challenge; Burning Stuff! The Year 3 play, *Out of this World*, and the Year 4 instrumental recital were both filmed this year because we were unable to invite an audience into school to watch; I hope that all those parents of children in either Years 3 or 4 received those links so you can see your children for yourselves. If you didn't, please let me know and I will send them out again. The House Music Competition took a very different format this year and well over a hundred children were involved; the semi-finalists were anonymously recorded and their peers voted as to who should go through to the final. An outside adjudicator visited for the final and was extremely complimentary, calling the event a 'musical party'.

We had a very short but very lovely memorial to Mrs Tall one windy Friday this term where we 'opened' the play equipment that we bought from the kind donations of parents. A number of children shared their memories: *'Every time I fell over and hurt myself, she would always help me. At*

home, I have a blanket that she knitted when I was a baby' and 'Whenever I fell over she would come and make sure I was alright when I was unwell. She made me feel good; she would wipe away my tears and say I was a brave girl. And now I say she is a brave, brave lady. I hope she is still smiling every day'. Mr Tall and his two children came to join us as we unveiled the equipment with a plaque commemorating Mrs Tall's contribution to our school.

One of the main purposes of this letter, apart from a re-cap of our term, is to acknowledge the amazing work that both teachers and parents have done this week to ensure the continuation of the children's learning. It certainly has been quite a steep learning curve for all. One of my 'mantras' that I have used all week with so many people is 'just do your best'. We are fully aware that many parents are still running their businesses from home and may have one or more children who are needing support with their remote learning. This must sometimes seem like an almost impossible task and I wanted to reassure all parents that we understand the challenges and we don't expect everything to be completed on time and in perfect order.

One week's experience of remote learning has taught us the following:

- It works best for parents to have everything ready for the day, in place on Everest or Tapestry, the previous evening or right at the beginning of the day at the very latest. After Easter, teachers are going to do this: all the following day's lessons should be ready for viewing the evening before.
- Although the teachers will be putting up lessons in line with your child's timetable, you don't have to ensure your child keeps to this in 'real time'; please decide what best suits your family and your arrangements at home. If you have three children and two devices, this is going to be tricky and timetables can't possibly be followed so please just do what works.
- If in doubt as to what lessons to prioritise, I would recommend a focus on the core subjects – English, maths and science and then something creative. Humanities is often topic based and I know the activities can be practical in nature so your child might relish that after working on the core areas.
- Something artistic, musical, technical and physical will also be uploaded on Everest, but, again, do what is possible and please don't be anxious about unfinished work. Please don't think I am suggesting that the work the teachers are setting is not important – it all is – but if it is completed to the detriment of your family's happiness and wellbeing, this is definitely not something that we want to happen.
- Finally – please do keep in touch with the teachers, both the form teachers and the subject teachers, who are all either working remotely or working in school with the children of critical workers. You can imagine that this is a new world for them, too, and I would like to thank them for their commitment as they continue their work – also as critical workers – at this most unusual and difficult of times.

It remains for me to wish you all a good break, if you are fortunate enough to have one, as well as wishing you strength and health during the weeks ahead. Our remote learning will start again at the beginning of term: Wednesday 15th April. I hope that we will all be back together again very soon and that we can enjoy some of the summer term on our beautiful site with your lovely children.

Kindest regards,
Sarah Patterson

