



Dear Parents and Carers,

We've now completed four weeks of Home Learning and this week had its own unique set of challenges. From snow drifts to power cuts, lots of us found ourselves in unusual situations and out of routine. I've been impressed with all of your determination and have seen a true 'keep calm and carry on' attitude from so many. Children from the '20s will never get to experience a real snow day now that we have online learning platforms, but I'm glad many of you still managed to build snowmen and enjoy the snowfall.

### **Nursery News**

The joy of Early Years is the in-the-moment planning. This enables us to adapt any existing planning to follow a child's interest in that moment. Of course, this week's interest was the SNOW! Our Nursery children used food colouring and paintbrushes to mark make in the snow; exploring colour, patterns, letter and number formation. We used our gross motor skills to throw snowballs into coloured hoops and build a giant snowman! We shared stories of playing in the snow with our families and enjoyed hot milk while watching 'The Snowman'. I wonder if we'll get any more snow to enjoy this weekend?

### **Mental Health and Screen Free Days!**

There's growing national concern for children's mental health and rightly so. For some of our children, the only interaction they have with other young people is through a screen. I have shared on all Google Classrooms some mental health resources to support with sleep patterns, screen time and managing the pressures of working at home. Working, schooling and parenting aren't designed to be done at the same time, but I know that many of you are trying to do this and are doing your best. Please talk to your Class Teacher if you have concerns, use local support groups and remember that there are national organisations who are there to help. We're all in this together and we're all doing the best we can.

Screen time and device usage is at an all time high; I know that I'm ready to be unplugged this weekend. I hope that we manage at least one completely screen free day before half term as I think this will help everyone, pupils and teachers. Fingers crossed for some good weather. Until then, consider using an overlay on screens or reduce the contrast setting. Some devices have 'Night Mode' and inbuilt features designed to be easier on the eyes. Scientists have proven that the blue light emitted from screens affects sleep so make sure no one's online one hour before bedtime. You can tell your children that Mr Thomas said so.

### **Behind the Screen**

We have made huge strides with our online provision. The sheer volume of work, interactivity and engagement from everyone is phenomenal. I just wanted to remind you all, and please remind your children, that there are real human beings behind the virtual classrooms! Some of the teachers themselves are balancing working from home, with their own children in the background, or from school with other children in the room. Most of our teachers have at least two computers and four screens just to be able to see what's going on. Please be patient with them.



## School Council

Today the School Council met to share their views on Home Learning and make their suggestions for future events and activities. It was great to see a representative from every year group on screen, working together and listening to each other's ideas. We'll try to implement as many as we can. Some may take a little longer, like virtual class pets! I'll share the meeting minutes in Google Classrooms over the weekend so you can all see the brilliant suggestions.

## Staff Spotlight

This week in the spotlight is our famous chef (Catering Manager), **Mr Turner-Fountain**.

I joined St Peter's School in 2002, hard to believe that's 19 years ago now. I love working at St Ps. I first trained at North Oxfordshire Technical College (the same place as Gordon Ramsey!) and went on to work in hotels and hospitality. I worked at Stanton House Hotel where I learnt lots, including Japanese. Before venturing into the kitchen, I was Assistant Restaurant Manager at Whitney Lodge Hotel. Those that know me, know I love performing. It's been amazing to see so many smiling St Peter's families in the audience at the Corby Cube as I embrace my inner Ugly Sister in shows and pantomimes like Cinderella and Oliver! Signing autographs for our children after a show is always a highlight. I'm most proud of my achievements in Corby's Strictly Come Dancing, winning as a novice and as a professional. I first entered this competition because of a friend who had cancer and we have gone on to raise lots of money for the Lakeland Hospice. St Peter's is a great big family, that's what makes it so special.

Finally, many of our parents are critical workers, some on the frontline for the NHS. Thank you. We will continue to support you so that you can support others. Have a fantastic weekend everyone. Stay well, physically and mentally. Remember, it's not hard because you're doing it wrong, it's hard because you're doing it right.

Regards,

Mr Thomas

Headteacher

This week's menu can be found here <https://www.st-peters.org.uk/page/?title=Weekly+Menus&pid=11>