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Wednesday 29th April 2020

Dear Ellingham Families,

The Summer Term began last week, not in the way we would have wanted, but it has marked the return to learning after a gloriously sunny Easter break. I hope you managed to get out into the garden or enjoy the sunshine in your allocated exercise slot. I was in school last week, after some extensive recuperation, and it was so lovely to see our key worker children really enjoying themselves but it reinforced how much we are missing seeing all of the children's smiling faces. I know that you and your children have been called by their teacher last week and into this week, and every teacher has come away from these calls uplifted and motivated by the personal connection. I hope it has brought your children some joy too.

There is no sign of the lockdown lifting for schools although there is plenty of speculation in the press. Teaching unions are very active in liaising with the Department for Education (DfE) and headteachers have completed surveys to feed into any discussion about returning to school safely. The challenge of social distancing young children in a class and around the school remains significant and there are plenty of scenarios being investigated. We hope to have sufficient notice before a return to put in place any adjustments to the physical space to keep us all safe and to adapt our teaching approach to whatever is presented to us. The media will continue to speculate but as soon as I know officially, I will let you know.

I want to say well done to you and your children for your valiant efforts at-home learning. We do know that families face different challenges not just from sharing scarce laptops but maybe trying to step in as teachers to explain tricky concepts. Trust us, we're teachers and we understand how stressful that can be! Please be kind to yourselves. We are here to help. If your child needs support, let the teacher know via Google Classroom or through the year group emails (click here). Parents have had some great suggestions for improved contact and home learning and we do welcome your ideas. Please give us time to discuss and assess how we can put some of these ideas into action. Ellingham teachers have been valiant in their efforts to master Google Classrooms and on-line learning from ground zero – literally two weeks prior to lockdown most staff were not familiar with the programme – but we are still on our learning curve.

Next week is the build up to VE Day (Victory in Europe) and, if the school was on we would be focusing on marking this occasion through project work across the school. It is such a momentous date that we have organised for some of the learning next week to be focused on this, across the subjects. Please get involved if you can – it's a lovely thing to learn about and celebrate together.

Keep well and keep safe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Keogh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'L' and 'K'.

Lisa Keogh
Headteacher