



20th January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Update on closure situation for nursery, home learning and nursery communications

You will have heard that the Scottish Government has now **extended the closure of nurseries and schools until the middle of February at the earliest. This will be reviewed on February 2nd**. At that time we will hopefully have a date for nurseries reopening before too long. I know from conversations with many parents during this time that so many of you are finding this a challenging and worrying time. Many of you are finding that your children are missing their friends and you are worried about their learning and development. Some parents are working from home and it is proving to be very difficult to care for your child whilst working. Generally, we are all feeling anxious and unhappy about the situation; please know that staff are here to chat with you by telephone during the day and please do not hesitate to phone us to talk, whether it is to discuss difficulties with supporting your child or you are just feeling you would like to talk to someone. It may be that we can offer some advice that can help.

You will also be aware that a small number of children are eligible to continue to attend nursery; the Government calls the groups “vulnerable children” and “children of keyworkers”. You can find details of who is eligible at this link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-childcare-provision-2021/pages/vulnerable-children/>

The overall aim of the closure at present though is to reduce as far as possible the number of children and families meeting and interacting. If you believe that your child should be offered a place at this time, please contact the nursery and speak with Steve or Sharon who can discuss this with you further. The offer of places is not a decision just made by nursery; senior colleagues within Glasgow City Council are involved with making decisions on who is and is not eligible for a place.

Over the previous weeks our aim has been to continue offering support and ideas for play and learning at home so that you feel supported in best continuing your child’s progress at home. This is unlikely to be as effective as children attending nursery in person but I hope that it feels like a help for parents. The recent parent survey on this had a very limited response, however almost all of the commenting parents found the home learning shared to be helpful to them. So far we have aimed to:

- Provide books to children to support parents without books or who want fresh resources
- Give a number of suggested activities every day which link to the book and which will support language, physical activity and health and wellbeing
- Share videos of staff reading stories or providing other activities
- Share other links which should support home learning and support parents

We will quickly be updating our home learning plan to offer new resources when we have provided activities for all of the books which have been distributed to families. **Please note that all of the home learning is shared on Twitter (install Twitter app or use Twitter on a website and follow us on @Renfrewstreet).** If you have any problems accessing the shared activities on Twitter, please phone us so we can help. I also aim for us to provide more personal videos and messages from staff, so that children can in some way feel connected to staff, and also to offer the opportunity for children to meet their keyworker and go for a short walk locally (which parents would need to come along for too).

There is further advice for parents at <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/> and <https://www.parentclub.scot/child>. I would offer some general advice as follows:

- **Try not to put pressure on yourself or your child.** It is expected that children will not respond to learning and play activities in the same way as they do at nursery. Aim to have some play and learning experiences which feel very positive and have a happy time with your child during these times, rather than trying to have your child take part in everything and feel like you are *making* them do activities. Talking to your child and reading to them are two of the best things you can do.
- **Keep your child healthy through daily physical activity.** Local walks can be safe; fresh air and sunlight is important. Some of the physical activities shared can be good for getting your child moving which underpins everything in their learning and development.
- **Try and keep some sort of a routine even if it is different than usual.** Include a consistent time to get up in the morning, go to bed, and have snacks and lunch together. Include some physical activity breaks. Try and limit screen time. Involve children in making snacks, tidying up and cooking – children often enjoy helping with jobs such as hanging up washing. It can help to draw out a daily routine with your child with pictures, so that they can see what their day looks like.

IMPORTANT – NURSERY COMMUNICATIONS:

You will have received text messages before with nursery updates and news. From now on, we will only be using this for urgent communications. **Future letters and information will continue to be shared on Twitter, but we will also email you through your child's learning journal account.** This means you will receive an email message (sometimes with attachments) from renfrewstreet@yourlearningjournals.co.uk and you can reply to this which we can see. The email we send will go to the email account registered for your child's learning journals update, or it will appear on the Learning Journals app if you have this installed. I will send a test message by the end of today. If you have any problems receiving messages, or you would like another parent added to receive messages, then simply let us know and we can fix this for you or add a parent – we just require an accurate email address.

Please remember to phone us at any time if you feel like talking over anything that is difficult. We have staff here Monday to Friday, 8.30am-3.30pm or you can email to ask us to call you.

Yours Sincerely



Steve Rivers - Head of Nursery