



Dear Parents,

For many of you, Friday marked a premature end to the Spring Term, without any real certainty as to when the new term will begin. It has certainly been a challenging and unsettling period for everyone, whatever your walk of life. Having started the year with Brexit dominating the news and trying to predict the changes this would bring, we have moved immediately into the COVID-19 impacting upon us all in one way or another.

Throughout all of the uncertainty, however, your children have continued to be an absolute pleasure to be with, working hard, behaving well and impressing us all with their humour, wisdom and resilience. As always, there have been many things to celebrate in school over this term with many children taking part in a range of inter-school sports events and achieving great success along the way. Particular congratulations go to the swimming teams who scooped most of the medals in the various galas held recently, and to the team who won the inter school Go Active team championship. I should also mention the two teams who represented the school in this year's Youth Speaks competition and were, as always, hugely impressive in terms of their confident speaking performances - truly awe inspiring.

As you will be aware, the school will be open from Wednesday of this week for a limited number of children of Key Workers. We contacted parents on Friday with information on how to register for this provision and will be in touch with those parents who are eligible today or Tuesday in order to finalise the details.

For children who will not be attending school until we re-open, each class has a link on the school website (www.alverton.eschools.co.uk) under the Home School Learning tab. Class teachers will be updating these pages daily with suggestions for work to be completed by children during the period of closure. We have also set up temporary email addresses for the class teachers to use which they will share with parents so that children's work can be submitted etc; Choughs and Robins parents should continue to use the existing Tapestry system to do this. Any general queries should still be sent through to Vervan on the secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk email address; in addition, the school office will be open for telephone (01736 364087) queries most week days for the period of closure.

I am sure that you will join me in thanking our staff for their hard work and professionalism in ensuring that the children's learning experiences continued to be of their usual high quality despite the uncertainty and disruption in the outside world. It is a shame that we won't be able to properly share some of this work with you in the exhibitions we had planned. I know that staff are sharing some of the work produced on our Twitter site (@alvertonschool).

The global nature of the COVID-19 problems has once again reminded me just how interconnected we are as a world population. Conversely, it has also reaffirmed my belief that it is our local communities which are best placed to meet the needs of families and individuals. I hope that one of the positive consequences of the current difficulties will be evidence that we are still capable of working together and acting selflessly for those in need of our help.

On behalf of all our staff and governors I look forward to working with you next term, whenever that begins, and wish you all a very safe and healthy extended break.

Best wishes

Martin Higgs

Online safety

Please see the information below with some excellent advice about suggested Apps and Games. We will be publishing a different information page each week. All this information can be found on the National Online Safety website (a link to which can be found on our website).

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.



Learning



MAGIC PIANO BY SMILE

While Magic Piano doesn't strictly teach you how to play the piano, it does teach hand-eye coordination and can help spark creativity in young minds. Users can play along to a variety of popular songs on a range of difficulty levels in an attempt to get through the song with as few mistakes as possible, increasing dexterity and reaction times. Free on iOS & Android, the game does contain some ads and in-app purchases, so be sure to check these out before letting younger players unleash their musical side. Magic Piano is PEGI 3 rated but requires slightly more nimble hands to master so older kids will get the most from this.



AZOOMEE

Azoomee houses over 1,000 games, videos and activities for kids of all ages to play, have fun and most importantly, develop their key skills in. The app is award winning, BAFTA nominated, supported by the NSPCC (according to the description on their app page) and comes with a suite of parental controls built in. As well as educational games, activities and kid's favourite TV shows, the app also has a built-in chat feature where they can talk to their friends safely. A nice little touch is that if you buy a subscription to Azoomee for unlimited premium content for £4.99 a month, a portion of the money raised goes towards supporting the NSPCC. The app is available on iOS, Android and Amazon.



POLY BRIDGE

While Poly Bridge could be easily enjoyed solely as a game, it's actually an incredibly clever way to learn critical thinking and engineering skills in a kid friendly way. It's set in a colourful, cartoony world and has extremely simple gameplay. In Poly Bridge, it's your task to get cars, buses, trucks, boats and more safely to their destination by designing bridges that are safe and practical. How those bridges are created is entirely up to you. With over 100 levels, a sandbox mode and almost infinite playability, Poly Bridge is available on PC, Android, iOS and Nintendo Switch at various price points, so be sure to check which is the best option for you.



CROSSWORD PUZZLES (WUBU APPS LTD)

Crossword puzzles might not immediately seem like a learning game for younger kids, but they're incredibly effective at building strong word skills and problem solving. This one by Wubu Apps Limited is exclusive to iOS and constantly changes its roster of daily crosswords and challenges, although there are a whole bunch of apps available out there which do similar things. The app is rated 4+ but would likely be suited to kids a little older as the crosswords are designed for adults as well. As mentioned, Crossword Puzzles is only available on iOS devices and is free to download but does contain in-app purchases.



SCRIBBLENAUTS UNLIMITED

Scribblenauts is a game like few others in that it actively encourages children to use their intuition to solve a variety of puzzles. Armed only with their imagination, players must complete levels by conjuring potentially useful items for main character Maxwell to collect the Starites and achieve his goal. The game helps create strong vocabulary and word association to a fun 2D backdrop. While any version of Scribblenauts is good, Unlimited is the most readily available, being released on Wii U, PC, Nintendo 3DS, iOS and Android devices, PS4, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch.



National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday



Just for Fun



SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY

Widely regarded as one of the greatest games Nintendo have ever made, Super Mario Odyssey provides family friendly fun and a challenging environment for kids to learn new skills in a video game. Rated PEGI 7, Odyssey can be enjoyed by almost any age range, even those who are young at heart. The caveat is that the game is only available on Nintendo Switch, so some investment will need to be made, but the console boasts a host of other child-safe titles and the ability to play on the go as well as at home.



NETFLIX

As obvious as it may sound, Netflix's children's section is ideal for keeping young ones and toddlers out of trouble on long journeys or at home. The specific profile for kids allows them to only view content appropriate for younger audiences which lets you and them watch their favourite shows and movies anywhere, at any time. Curated playlists, easy navigation through TV series and movies, and no-hassle auto-play means a stress-free guarantee. The only downside to the app is that it requires a Netflix subscription in order to use it but if you're happy to pay the monthly cost, it's an absolute must for any parent.



MINECRAFT

Minecraft is one of those rare, timeless classics that can be enjoyed by every age group. Coming in both a console version and a pocket edition for mobile devices, the sandbox world-building fun in Minecraft can be an amazing place to let your imagination run wild. The game can be played online with friends and supports cross-play, meaning that no matter what device everybody has, it can be played together. While the game isn't free, it will undoubtedly provide hours and hours of fun for the whole family so it's worth the investment of a one-time purchase. As one of the most popular games ever released, it inspires critical thinking, problem solving and above all, fun.



LEGO MOVIE MAKER 2

The LEGO Movie Maker 2 app lets users create their own stop-motion movies and upload them for others to watch online. Kids can create a short LEGO movie in whatever genre they like using a range of easy to use tools and are able to add in sounds and visual effects to make the videos look super realistic. All movies are moderated before they make it online so you can be sure no sensitive information is uploaded or viewed by third parties. The app is free to download on both iOS and Android devices but does require creation of a LEGO account to upload videos. The only information needed for an account is the country you live in, your email address and date of birth. While it's rated for 4+, kids of 8 and up will get the most out of this one.



ADVENTURES OF POCO ECO: LOST SOUNDS

If something more slow-paced and chilled out is on your radar, Adventures of Poco Eco should be able to scratch that itch. With an emphasis on creating a rich and inviting musical soundscape over hardcore gameplay, the puzzle action is perfect for unwinding young minds, as opposed to challenging them. The single-player game is available on all iOS and Android devices, as well as the Amazon Kindle Store and you can also nab yourself a free copy of the soundtrack with the purchase.



Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGBible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



Contacting school

Please be aware that whilst school remains open for some children, there will be **no admittance** to the building or grounds for any parents, visitors or children not currently at school. If you need to contact us please do so by email (secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk) or by calling the office between 9am-3pm, Monday to Friday on 01736 364087.

Outstanding debts

Please could you all check your Schoolmoney accounts and pay any outstanding debts as soon as possible. There are some dating back to last term and equate to £761 in total owed to the school for breakfast club, trips, swimming, nursery etc. If you are having problems logging onto Eduspot to pay or have any queries about the debts, please contact the office between 9am-3pm and we will be happy to help.

Goodbye

Last week we said goodbye to Miss Carney who has been working in Lanyon class and Miss Tonkin who has been in Kingfishers as part of their teaching practice for their PGCEs. They have both been a fantastic addition and help to Mrs Dennison and Mr Dawe and we have really enjoyed having them. We would like to wish them every success with their next placements and their future teaching careers.

Twitter

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter @alvertonschool to keep up-to-date with all the exciting things that are going on.



Contact numbers and email addresses

It is very important that for emergency purposes and effective communication that we have an up-to-date mobile number and email address for you. If you are unsure about the information we have for you, please contact the school office.