



20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Hope Families,

What a week! Things have moved fast, and we now know that for most families school will be closed, although we are still planning and working out what that will look like for all families. What we do know is that for many of us life is going to look somewhat different over the coming weeks and months.

Although we will not welcome children and their families to Central Hall every day, we want to make sure that whilst we may have to physically keep a social distance, we still are together as a community.

The challenges we may face of self-isolation, being unwell, or perhaps increased anxiety about the challenges we are facing.....and more, mean that it is so important that we look for ways to be community together – to care for and support one another and to stay connected.

The Chinese word for ‘crisis’ is made up of two characters, one that means ‘danger’ and the other that means ‘opportunity’. This crisis could well be an opportunity to strengthen our connections and develop our community.

So how can we do this?

### **‘Hope in the community’**

Over the coming weeks we anticipate that different ones of us will need help and support in many different ways – this demand is not something that current services, nor any organisation will have the capacity or resource to meet – however we believe that together as a community we have the opportunity to care for one another and come through this crisis stronger. So we are about to launch a closed Facebook page called ‘Hope in the Community’. This will be both a space for us to connect with one another – as well as to offer help you may be able to give and ask for help if you need it – much like an online version of the cards you may have seen on the news that neighbours have posted through other’s doors. You can follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hopeinthecommunity/>

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## **Buddy up - #whoareyour2?**

We also suggest that you ask a couple of people to be your buddies – ask them to check in on you, and if they would be willing, should you find yourself struggling for whatever reason for you to reach out and ask for help. Some of you will already have friends and family you know you can call on, and others won't – but now is the time to ask. Why not use the last day of school this week to ask another parent to swap contact details and encourage one another to ask #who are your 2? You could even get ahead of the game and offer to be someone's buddy especially if you know they don't have family nearby.

## **Prayer and pastoral support**

You'll know that here at Hope we are a Christian designated school and many of the staff and volunteers continue to have hope even in these unprecedented times because we believe in a real God who cares and is bigger than us and makes a difference. Whatever your personal faith or beliefs, if you would like someone to pray for you then you can email our chaplain [annabel.wright@newcommunity.org.uk](mailto:annabel.wright@newcommunity.org.uk) with your prayer request – we have a team at New Community Church who will pray for you and your family whatever your circumstances.

We hope that over the next few weeks if and when the changes we are all experiencing bring challenges, that you will reach out to your buddies or to our supportive community through the Facebook page above. If however you do find yourself struggling then do let us know - you can e-mail the school office [southampton@hopecommunityschool.org](mailto:southampton@hopecommunityschool.org).

We will be thinking of and praying for you all as we find a new normal over the coming weeks.

We have HOPE – the confident expectation of good, and we hope that in the middle of the fear and social distancing we will cultivate a different kind of connection and care that will remain long after the danger has passed.

With our very warm wishes

Steve Wright      and      Annabel Wright

Principal                      Chaplain

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