



Arts in Care Homes How To guide



Only Connect Postcard Pen Pals

As part of our *Only Connect* project, we are helping care settings to develop pen pal partnerships. At this time, due to the Coronavirus situation, we are encouraging *Only Connect* Pen Pal partners to send messages to care homes by email.

A nice way to keep in touch is for care settings to receive and send postcards. This can be done fairly easily and is less time consuming than writing letters. However, it can still be very creative!

We would particularly like to link up school children with care homes. We hope that this might help both groups feel less isolated and anxious at this difficult time and also encourage creativity.

Why not setup an *Only Connect* Postcard Pen Pal partnership with a local care home or one further afield? You could see if all the pupils in your child's class want to join in and send weekly postcards to a care home.

Contact us if you would like to be linked up with a care home. Visit:
www.artsincarehomes.org.uk/onlyconnect

Only Connect Postcard Challenge

Step 1

Link up with a care home to start your Only Connect partnership.

Send an introductory email to say hello and set up your pen pal partnership. Say who you are and a bit about yourself or your group.

Step 2

Make or buy blank postcards

You could buy blank postcards for this or make your own, using white card or paper. Use thin, white card and cut into postcard sized rectangles: 140 mm x 100m.

One side is for your image and the other is for your message.

On the image side, you will be creating nice images using drawings/collage and or writing. On the text side of your postcard, write your messages, nice and clearly. As we are sending postcards by email, there is no need to include the care home's address or a stamp. This means more room for your messages!

Art Materials

You will need basic art materials ie felt tips, crayons, paper glue as well as either blank postcards or white card.

Step 3

Weekly Postcard Challenge

If you are doing this with a group of other school children, you may wish to set up an Only Connect Whatsapp group. We suggest the Group Admin sends an initial email to the home, informing them that you intend to send out weekly postcards on different themes.

The Group Admin can share the weekly postcard challenge to their Whatsapp Only Connect class group. Decide what day you are going to share the Postcard Challenge. We recommend setting each weekly postcard challenge on a Monday and emailing the postcards to the care home on a Friday. This will give the children plenty of time to do their postcards.

Ensure that children do not include any personal details such as their surnames and addresses or emails on their postcards. All postcards to the care home should be sent to Group Admin member to circulate via email. Alternatively the group could share postcards on the Whatsapp group and the Admin can copy them and attach to email to care home.

We recommend sending one postcard per week. Make your postcard and take clear photos of each side. Email these photos as attachments to your partner care home.

Here are your weekly challenges:

Week 1 Postcard Challenge – Hello

This postcard will introduce you to the care home and explain more about the project. By sending a nice cheery 'Hello' from the outside world, we hope to raise the spirits of care home staff and residents!

Image

Write 'Hello' on the front of your postcard in large letters and decorate. Use Bubble writing or fancy lettering if you want to! Colour in and add shapes and patterns to decorate.

Suggested text

Dear (insert name of care home)

I go to (insert name of school) in (insert location).

I am in Year (insert)

I/we would like to send you postcards to let you know we are thinking of you all.

How are you all doing?

Best wishes... (insert your name)

Week 2 Postcard Challenge – Who am I?

Postcard with self-portrait image, sharing a bit more information about yourself. Write a few lines about yourself, your family and/or your interests. Finish with a question to the recipient(s), asking them about themselves. You could end with a message of support.

Image

Sit in front of a mirror with a pad and pencil. Draw a self-portrait. It can be quite basic, head and shoulders and then add more details afterwards ie hair, glasses, expression etc. Self-portraits can be quite difficult. Don't worry if it isn't perfect – drawing improves with practice!

Suggested text

Hello

My name is... I am...years old and live in ...

My main interest are ...

What do you like doing?

Message of support e.g.: We are all thinking of you /Keep smiling,
spring is on its way

Best wishes, ... (insert name)

Week 3 Postcard Challenge – if I was a biscuit

During difficult times, we need things to cheer us up and biscuits sometimes help! Think about what type of biscuit you would be and why. If you don't like biscuits, you could do the same with a piece of fruit, as healthy eating is also very important!

Image: Draw the type of biscuit you think you would be. Use colour and maybe arrows to indicate special features ie chocolate layer or jam. Biscuits with wrappers provide lots of scope for nice typography. Google the artist Andy Warhol's paintings of soup cans for inspiration.

Thanks to Salmagundi Films for this idea!

Suggested text

Dear (insert name of care home)
If were a biscuit I would be a ...
That is because ...
What type of biscuit would you be?
What things help to cheer you up?
Best wishes...

Week 4 Postcard Challenge – Words of Wisdom

This week your image is a written message. Could you share a piece of advice or a saying that you think is funny or helpful?

Image

Write out clearly in simple letters your Words of Wisdom phrase or saying. Ideally this should be a few words or a sentence. You could put the saying or phrase in a speech bubble.

Suggested text

Dear...
I would like to share this saying because...
I was told this message by ...
Do you have any words of wisdom or pieces of advice?
Best wishes ...

For example: “NEVER GIVE UP” - Be like Percy Verence: (Perseverence)
Thanks to Arts in Care Homes’ Grandad for this message!

Week 5 Postcard Challenge – View from my Window/ The Outside World

It can be easy to feel isolated and bored if you stay indoors for very long. For this week’s challenge, draw an image of what is outside your window. If you really don’t like your view, draw an imaginary image or copy a picture of a place where you’d like to be.

Image

Look outside your window and draw what you see. Allow yourself time to really look at your surroundings and take in all the details, colours and shapes. Maybe sketch your view, first in pencil or ink and then add colour later. Alternatively find a nice picture to copy or draw from your imagination.

Suggested Text

Dear...

When I look out of my window, this picture on the front of this postcard is what I see.
The weather is? And I can hear the sounds of ???

Or I wish I was in? Because...

Or this is my dream place because...

Best wishes ...

Week 6 Postcard Challenge – Colour

This week we are thinking about colour. Choose your favourite colour and write a poem based on it. You could write why you like it or what it makes you think of.

One way to write a poem is to come up with several lines starting with Chosen colour is... Think of memories and associations with this colour. Keep on repeating Chosen colour is... then edit poem until it sounds right to you.

Or you could write an acrostic poem. This is a poem where the first letter of each line spells out a word. It doesn't have to rhyme e.g.:

*Yellow is my favourite colour
Every time I see it makes me happy
Lovely daffodils waving to me in the sunshine
Lots of colour everywhere
Outside looks so spring-like and happy
Wish that summer will soon be here.*

Image

This could be very simple – just some writing saying “This is my favourite colour” with a shape filled in with chosen colour. Or “I am sending you this... (insert name of colour)” with example of the colour. Or it could be a picture of something that is your favourite colour eg a daffodil for ‘yellow’.

Suggested Text

Dear ?

My favourite colour is ?

Or I am sending you this insert colour because...

What's your favourite colour and why?

Best wishes...

Paint colour charts can be a fun way of doing this activity. Some brands of paint use great names for different shades of colours. Enjoy looking at all the different names of paint colours and choose your favourite. A writer called John Berger, wrote a book called 'I send you this Cadmium Red' about an exchange of letters and artwork between him and a friend.

Week 7 Postcard Challenge – If I were a superhero

This week, please imagine you are a superhero. What is your name? What outfit would you wear? What are your special powers?

Image

Draw a picture of you as a superhero, including your superhero name and attention to detail on the outfit. You might also want to show your superpowers somehow.

Suggested Text

Dear ...

If I was a superhero my name would be...

My costume would be ... and I would have these special tools...

My super powers would be...

Who would you be?

Best wishes...

Week 8 Postcard Challenge – Inspirational Person

Think of someone who is very inspirational or your hero. This could be someone famous or someone you know. It could be a fictional character.

Image

If you can, draw this person, give attention to their clothes and what they are doing. You can copy pictures for this. If that is too hard, just write the name of the person in nice lettering.

Suggested Text

Dear
My hero is...
That is because...
I look up to them because...
Who is your hero?
Best wishes ...

Week 9 Postcard Challenge – Nature Collage

Spending time in the natural world can really help to lift one's spirits. If you are able to out, go for a walk or sit in a park or garden. Look around you, listen to the sounds, what can you smell and touch? If you have a camera take some photos. Or you could think about something in the natural world that makes you feel happy.

Image

Make a nature collage using different nature related images. You could tear pictures out of magazines for this, trim and arrange nicely and then stick securely onto postcard to make into a nature collage. If you have taken photos, print your favourite ones out and use for your nature collage. If you prefer, you could just use one nature image.

If you prefer, you could just use one nature image. This could be an image of flowers, birds or animals, a volcano, a waterfall

Suggested text

Dear...
Here is a picture of ...
I have chosen the image(s) because...
I think nature is important because...
Best wishes...

Week 10 Postcard Challenge – Jokes and cartoons

We all need something to make us laugh right now! Could you share your favourite joke? If you are able to do a cartoon to illustrate this joke, fantastic. If not, just the written joke is fine.

Image

Draw a cartoon to illustrate your joke or funny situation. Stick people are really great for this. You could do the whole joke on the front of the card using an image and text. Or you could write the first line of the joke such as “Knock, knock” and share the rest of the joke and the punchline on the message side of the card.

Suggested Text

Dear...
Here is a great joke which makes me laugh...
Please can you share your favourite joke?
Best wishes...

Week 11 Postcard Challenge – Haiku

This week we are going to try writing a haiku poem. A haiku is traditionally a Japanese poem consisting of three short lines that do not rhyme. The origins of haiku poems can be traced back as far as the 9th century.

Haiku poems have only three lines, totalling 17 syllables.

The first line is 5 syllables.

The second line is 7 syllables.

The third line is 5 syllables like the first.

Punctuation and capitalization are up to the poet and need not follow the rigid rules used in structuring sentences. Have a go at writing a poem. It could be about anything – how much you are missing your friends, being at home all the time, summer etc.

Image

Very clearly and as neatly as you can, write out your haiku. You can decorate card and add colour.

Suggested text

Dear...

I am sending you a haiku poem I have written. I hope you like it!

Haiku poems are from Japan

Would you like to try writing one? Haiku poems needs to have three lines with a total of 17 syllables.

Maybe we can read our haikus to each other one day!

Best wishes...

More info about haiku and some examples here:

<https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-haiku-poems.html>

Week 12 postcard Challenge – Where in the World?

Think about where in the world your family come from or live. Have a look at an atlas or globe and find the different countries your family has links with. Or think about which part of the UK you come from and what you like about it.

Image

Draw a picture of the different places your family come from or live. This could be the outline of the countries, copied from an atlas. Or it could be images related to the different countries. You could do a postcard from your home town with text saying 'Hello from (insert place name)' and some pictures of local landmarks.

Suggested text

Dear ...

My family have links with the following countries or come from this place.

Write more about those countries or the particular place.

I like the town I live in because...

What places do you and your family come from or live in?

Best wishes...

Week 13 Postcard Challenge – devise this yourself!

You might think that Arts in Care Homes has run out of ideas! You might be right or we could just be trying to make you even more creative! Come up with your own theme!

Image

Whatever you want it to be!

Suggested Text

Dear...

It has been so much fun writing to you!

I hope you have enjoyed getting my postcards.

I hope we can meet up in person one day!

Best wishes...

Some advice:

- You might also want to send postcards to family and friends.
- You can always do drawings on separate bit of paper and cut out and stick securely onto postcard.
- Don't worry if you don't think you are good at art. Drawing gets better with practice. Try to keep images clear and simple if you find drawing difficult. Stick people are great! Copying images can also help.
- Care homes might want to buy collection of vintage postcards (available on ebay) and use them for related activities.
- Can you come up with some more good postcard challenges? If so, we would love to hear from you. We would also love to see your postcard images and messages. Please send to: info@artsincarehomes.org.uk

Please share images of your Only Connect postcards on Social Media,
using the hashtag #OnlyConnectPenPals and tag @artsincarehomes
@NAPAlivinglife



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