

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

## Covid-19

### Easter Update

Dear Carers / Parents

For young people across the country, today would have been the end of the Spring Term and the next two weeks a well-earned break from school!

But these are different and unique times, and for the past two weeks most young people have been 'working from home' as part of the government's 'stay home, save lives' policy of social distancing.

We have been providing education in school for a small number of children, and we will continue to offer provision throughout the Easter holidays for the children of parents who are key workers and who continue to provide essential services.

However, we have also been working hard to help ensure that education remains available to all our children at home, and class leaders will have been in touch with you via email on a regular basis, to offer support and to advise and guide you and your children on the work that is available to do.

Your top priority remains keeping your children safe in the home, so tackling boredom and the feeling of confinement will be the biggest challenges. There has been a surge of practical help on the internet, with lots of fun ideas and things to do with your children, and so the work that we provide is just one of many things that you and your child can be doing through the day.

Staff have been swapping and sharing activities that they have found online and they will be passing these on to you if they think they are useful, so please make sure you are scanning your emails regularly for ones from school, and replying to them.



Thomas Ashton School • Bennett Street • Hyde • Tameside • SK14 4SS

Telephone: 0161 368 6208 • E-mail: [admin@thomasashton.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@thomasashton.tameside.sch.uk) • Web: [www.thomasashton.tameside.sch.uk](http://www.thomasashton.tameside.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mr R Elms

We are also trying to improve the way we share work and ideas with you, your children and between ourselves, so this is why we are promoting 'Google Classroom' at the moment. We think if we can get everyone signed in and using it, life will be simpler and communication more effective.

So please help us get this set up by looking out for emails from school and following any instructions that might be included. If you have an internet connection at home, but your child is having problems with the device they are using, I will lend them a Chromebook from school – please just ask!

For those of you eligible for Free School Meals, I'm sorry for the delay we are experiencing in getting the system up and running. When we signed up with the company Wonde, lots of other schools across the country did exactly the same thing at the same time, and whilst Wonde are busy sorting everyone out, it has simply taken longer than they expected due to the demand. We will get there, I promise, and everything is back-dated to the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Again, please keep checking for emails and/or text messages – you will probably hear from them before we do!

I have asked staff to continue to check in with you over Easter. I'm hoping you value the contact we have been maintaining with you. We are not just about providing your children with work – Thomas Ashton School has always tried to be supportive of our parents too, and my staff will be on the end of an email should you want to talk or if you feel you may need some help or support in some way.

The government is very aware that children with an EHCP can require additional help or support for a range of reasons, and school is just one of a range of services who help support children and their families. This is why it is important we have regular contact with you, so we know things are ok with you, but also to be there if you feel you need some support. We are just an email away, or a phone call to school when we return on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April.

In the meantime, Thameside Local Authority have asked me to make you aware of the following help that they have recently set up:

### **SEND PARENT HELPLINE**

**The SEND Pupil Support Service is now offering a Parent Helpline. The service is for the parents/carers of children with EHCPs, currently not in school. The service will offer support and guidance to parents who have SEND children at home, and who are currently struggling to support, engage and/or manage their SEND needs. Whilst the SEND team may be able to suggest strategies to help your child engage with school work set by school, they are not able to set**

**a curriculum for your child. The helpline will be available to parents from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, and will operate between the hours of 9am-1pm.**

**Helpline details as follows:**

**Mon-Fri**

**Working hours:**

**09.00-11.00 Tel: 0161-3438381**

**11.00-13.00 Tel: 07971132375**

I repeat, school can always be your first option, but it is good to know there is additional support on hand should you feel you need it.

It was fantastic to hear the applause for the NHS Services personnel last night. It is important to remember that we are all in this together, and we all have a part to play in helping to lower the risk of spreading the virus and reducing the demand on hospitals.

There are sad stories involving the loss of loved ones at this time, and for young children particularly this can be very distressing and confusing. There is a really good resource should you face the need to support your child through this situation:

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/>

'Winston's Wish' is a charitable organisation that is well regarded by all the services we work with, and may be worth a look by yourselves just to see what it does.

Missing you all

Stay safe!



Robin Elms  
Headteacher