

Covid-19 update
20.03.20

Dear Carers and Parents

First, can I thank you for your patience and understanding. I repeat from my letter yesterday – schools are not receiving information before parents. We are all receiving the same information at the same time. We are all dependent on the government at the moment to release essential information, so that we can then make plans and communicate with you. Deep breath everybody!!!

What we know:

The government has instructed schools to significantly reduce the numbers of pupils coming together in schools, in order to help slow down the spread of the coronavirus.

This is part of the 'social distancing' policy being introduced that sees people being asked to stay at home as much as possible for the foreseeable future.

Where possible and where reasonable and safe, the Government want children learning at home.

Last night the Prime Minister spoke optimistically about 'seeing off' the virus over the next 12 weeks, but the reality is, we simply do not know how long it might take.

This is happening world-wide, and there is a very real and underlying risk to the health and lives of some people in this country if we, as a whole population, do not come together and do what we can to help tackle the spread of the virus.

Social distancing is based on the simple, but significant, reduction of contact between people, and this needs to be done both at work and at play.

Schools have been asked to continue offering support for a small number of children where:

- parents have jobs that are on a list of vital services (known as 'critical workers'), and therefore need to continue attending a place of work
- the family are being supported by Social Care
- school is working particularly closely with a child in order to help support them at this time



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What we are going to do:

I have created a list of pupils from the above categories and need to have the list agreed by the local authority and Children's Social Care. Once this has been done we will be in touch with those families in order to make arrangements for next week.

For the children who are working from home, we also want to help support you as much as possible. We want to create the idea of the children remaining part of a 'virtual classroom', and this will be done by staff in school continuing to provide work to be done at home, and to maintain contact every day with each pupil.

This will mostly be done via email, which is why it is really important you have confirmed with school the email address that we can use to contact you and your child every day, and to send work to you.

We also need to know that you have a device that your child can comfortably work on at home, that is connected to the internet and that has a keyboard. It needs to be more than just a smartphone. If you do not have a device your child can safely use, please let us know and we will help you.

It is really important that you review your internet safety for your child by checking and putting in place, the necessary controls and filters to restrict the sites your child can access when on the internet.

Our plan is to have daily contact and to provide work to be done by your child. We use a lot of web based sites for learning and we can monitor what the children are working on. Staff will also set tasks and projects for the children to do, and this work can be sent back to us by attaching it to an email.

We realise that parents will need to be supporting the learning, and we want it to be as much fun as possible, so please talk to the class teacher as much as possible and ask for help or guidance if you need it.

This is a very unique situation, and we will learn together as we go along, and we will get better I'm sure!

We believe that maintaining a 'normal' routine as much as possible will help you at home, and so your child needs to be up and ready for work every morning by 9.30am. There will be a 'good morning' email every day which you will need to respond to, and if we don't hear from you we will phone you like we usually do to find out why.

We are still waiting for further guidance from the local authority about how best to address the issue of Free School Meals. Please keep an eye on the website as we will post information here as well as email it to you once we have the information we need.

What I need from you:

I know you will all do the best you can. Now is the time to show how much of a big family the school really is, by sticking together and helping each other as much as possible. My biggest worry is that you feel you are on your own and feel overwhelmed, and without seeing you we will really rely on you telling us how you feel.

We are here to support you as parents as much as your child, so please talk to us. You are not on your own! Parents talking to parents is another great way of feeling supported, and we will explore how social media might help us create a meeting place for parents.

We know that the mental health and emotional wellbeing of everyone is going to need some extra help during this time, including ourselves, so we will be looking for ways of doing this through the activities we will be asking you and your child to do.

We need to be gentle and patient with each other as we adapt to the new way of working. We understand this will be quite challenging for some of the children, but we must persevere because we face the prospect of having to work this way for quite a while. Communication is vital therefore, and we ask that you talk to us, by email or over the phone, as much as you need to, to help you get through this.

Please don't forget that the staff here also have families who are going through the same experience as yourselves, so again I urge us all to be kind to each other and to accept this is a very new experience for us all.

4 essential things I need to know from you:

- **you have confirmed the email address we can use to send work/communicate with your child at home**
- **you have a suitable device for your child to use OR you need help with a device**
- **you have confirmed a telephone number we can use during the day**
- **the occupation of the adults in the house including full-time parents**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

I will try to keep things briefer in future, so apologies for the length of this letter, but we need to get things rolling!

Robin Elms