

21st April 2020



Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome back to term 5! I hope you all had a restful Easter break and are staying safe and well. We have lots of engaging and fun activities planned, which staff will be sharing with you each week. We recognise that each pupil and family circumstances are different. We appreciate the feedback we have already received from many parents and endeavour to respond to make the learning experience suited to individual needs. Staff continue to be available to provide support and guidance to you and your child, so please do get in touch if you require our help. In particular, we are aware of the increased amount of time pupils are required to access online sites/activities and if you have any concerns or questions around how to keep your child safe online we can signpost you to resources and information.

As you are aware, government advice remains that children should be kept at home wherever possible and only those children of Key workers or vulnerable children who cannot be safely cared for at home will be offered a place at school. This is to keep everyone safe and to prevent the risk of spreading the virus further. If government advice changes, we will write to keep you informed and to tell you how we will implement any updated advice.

Over the Easter holidays further advice has been published and we felt it would be useful to let you know some of the key points in relation to how we are keeping children safe at school and how we will continue to do this if more children are permitted to attend in the coming weeks and months. Some key points for your information are included below:

- Any children, parents, carers, staff or any visitors, such as suppliers, will be asked not to visit the school if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19);
- Where children are travelling on school buses or taxi provision, drivers and staff will consider how best to ensure social distancing can be maintained throughout the journey, including for pick up and drop off points;
- We will ensure class sizes reflect the numbers of teaching and support staff available and are kept as small as possible and are provided with sufficient space to avoid having to gather in larger groups;
- We will, where necessary, stagger lunch times, break times, etc., or provide more than one location for these activities to avoid unnecessary contact and movement around the school and to reduce large groups of children gathering;
- We will aim to avoid the need for parents / careers to gather at school gates or outside the school entrance;
- We will reinforce messages about social distancing and the importance of hand washing regularly, reminding all staff and children to:

- wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds frequently. We will ensure help is available for children and young people who have trouble washing their hands independently;
- not touch their faces;
- to use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste.

The DfE guidance explains that it is harder to maintain social distancing within schools who cater for younger children (we believe this also applies to all special schools). We will implement all measures we are advised to, as far as it is practicable and possible to do so whilst ensuring all children are kept safe and well cared for.

We have also taken additional steps to ensure the school and in particular, the areas being used most frequently, are regularly cleaned, with additional cleaning of surfaces, door handles, washrooms etc.

We ask that parents and carers take note of the government advice in relation to supporting schools if they have a child attending during this period:

What parents can do:

- talk to their children about coronavirus (COVID-19), social distancing and handwashing;
- follow [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#);
- do not gather at entrances or at school gates / car parks, and model social distancing to help their children learn good practice.

Further advice has also been published over the Easter holidays for parents which you may find helpful summarised below:

Launch of the Oak National Academy online classroom and resource hub

The sector-led Oak National Academy has today launched its online classroom and resource hub. The Academy offers 180 video lessons each week for schools to use, across a broad range of subjects. The lessons cover children in Reception through to Year 10 and are free to use by both teachers and young people. The Oak National Academy can be accessed here: <https://www.thenational.academy/>

Launch of BBC Bitesize

The BBC has today launched an education package across TV and online, featuring celebrities and teachers, helping to keep children learning at home and supporting parents. BBC Bitesize can be accessed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Guidance for parents and carers on supporting their children's education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

We have published information, guidance and support for parents and carers of children who are learning at home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Guidance on helping children with special educational needs and disabilities learn at home can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Updated guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings

The guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings has been updated with additional information on the support available for parents, online educational resources and support for vulnerable children. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Finally I wanted to share how impressed and proud I am by the level of resilience being shown by our pupils and I will be writing to them later this week to share this with them directly. They are discovering sources of strength, and even joy in new and different experiences.

Take care.



Natalie Edwards
Acting Principal