



Be nice, work hard, never give up

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well as we approach the halfway point of this very unusual half term. It's pleasing to see that so many families are engaging with the work we are providing for those children learning from home. None of us can claim that this situation is easy so we thank you for all you are doing to support your child's learning. I don't know about you but this Lockdown seems to be much harder to adjust to than previously. The dark evenings and the blustery weather certainly doesn't help!

Remote Learning

This week it has been lovely to see so many children popping up on screen at class or group Google Meets. I hope that the children have enjoyed the opportunity to connect with their classmates and their teachers.

Just a couple of points to note when taking part in a Google Meet:

- Ensure that your child is not attending a Goggle Meet from their bedroom – this is a personal space. It is best to participate in a lounge, dining room or kitchen. Whilst you don't need to be sat next to your child at the meeting, it is helpful if you keep a door open so you can check in regularly with them.
- Be aware that the camera is on and that anyone in the background can also be seen.
- Ensure that your child is dressed appropriately and not in their pyjamas. There is no need for school uniform but it is school.
- Do not record or take photos of the sessions.
- Children must maintain the same standard of behaviour expected in school – thank you for your support with this.

Greenleas Remote Learning offer can be found on our website. As mentioned previously, this is a steep learning curve for us all. Staff are continuing to work very hard, learning and sharing new ways of working with you. We will continue to reflect on our provision, our staffing capacity and adapt to meet the needs of all our children academically, socially and emotionally in any way we can.

On-Site Provision

The number of children in school remains high and requests for places continue to flood in. In normal circumstances, we know that the best place for all children is in school. This currently is not an option. I thought now might be a good time to share with you a wider context so that you have some further understanding of the current situation in school. Hopefully, I will address some of the questions that you may have regarding our provision below.

How did you choose which children could come to school?

Guided by our values of honesty, co-operation and respect, we invited the parents of children who fell into the frontline critical worker categories to make themselves known and share their circumstances. Parents were asked to provide us with information from their employer regarding their role, shift patterns and ability to work from home. This was done with a level of trust and the hope for honesty from all parties. Where there is an adult at home we expect children to remain at home too. The government message is clear, stay at home if you can. Restricted attendance in schools was put in place to help reduce the spread of the virus in the community.

Government guidance, advice from the authority, Public Health and our Health and Safety risk assessment have been used to help us prioritise places and ensure we minimise risks for all. Any onsite provision we can offer is subject to us having the staffing capacity to operate safely in line with our risk assessment and the guidance. There may well become a time when we have to prioritise our places further.

Vulnerable children have been dealt with sensitively and parents approached and invited to send their children in.

How many Critical Worker and vulnerable children are there in school and what does provision for them look like?

We currently have approximately 45% of our children accessing some on site provision. I greatly appreciate those of you who are keeping your children at home where you can.

Children are working within class bubbles on the same tasks and activities that are being accessed by the children at home. Staff are all in school teaching, setting and responding to remote learning, holding virtual meetings and carrying out wellbeing checks at the same time.

What are the risks of having more children in school?

With more children in school, the number of children, families and staff in contact with each other increases. This could result in an outbreak of the virus that would spread further through the community than it would if there were less children in school. The likelihood of having to close bubbles due to positive cases is also heightened, resulting in staff and parents who are critical workers having to isolate for ten days, thus unable to fulfil their roles. I have a duty of care to all of our Greenleas community to prioritise health and safety to keep everyone safe. .

Home learning is a struggle for us as we are both working fulltime from home. This doesn't feel fair.

With so many places of work continuing to be open, less employers furloughing staff and those working from home expected to meet their usual targets and outcomes, it is no surprise that families are finding this lockdown a real challenge. We acknowledge this. We are all working to government rules, regulations and guidance, and with the purpose of this being to limit face to face contact with people this unfortunately also limits the support we can give you other than through the type of home learning we are providing. The fact that it is hard at home for a parent is not, in itself, a reason for a child to be allocated a place in school.

I worry about the impact being away from school will have on my child. What if they fall behind their peers?

We are in very unusual and worrying times. The true impact of the pandemic will be felt in many areas of society for many years to come. The mental health and wellbeing of your children needs to be the foremost priority right now. Learning happens when children are well, feel stable, are happy, secure and know they are loved.

After returning from the first school 'closures' our top priority was to support our children's wellbeing and help them to reconnect with school life. As a school, we ensured we healed these gaps before trying to close gaps in learning. When we return to full time education children will be measured from their starting points and their social, emotional and learning needs will be catered for.

I work all day so I can't support my child's learning between 9.00 and 3.00.

Every family needs to find a way of balancing working and educating that works for them. We provide a structure for home learning that you are very welcome to adapt. If you need to alter the hours of learning, take breaks or adjust the activities then so be it. You are your child's primary carer; you know them the best. Some children learn concepts very quickly, others need to revisit concepts in small chunks of time over and over again. We believe the approach to remote learning we have taken provides the flexibility to undertake learning when it is appropriate for your family, and accommodates the many different family groups we have along with the varying amounts of technology and devices you have.

Finally,

We are Not all in the Same Boat

I heard that we are all in the same boat.

But it's not like that.

We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat.

Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be.

Or vice versa.

For some, quarantine is optimal: a moment of reflection, of reconnection

Easy, in flip flops, with a cocktail or coffee.

For others, this is a desperate financial and family crisis.

For some that live alone they're facing endless loneliness whilst for others it is peace, rest and time with their mother, father, son and daughter

Some were concerned about getting a certain Egg for Easter while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk or eggs for the weekend.

Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment and are running out of money.

Others want to scream at those who break the quarantine.

Some are home spending hours a day helping their child with online schooling while others are spending hours a day to educate their children on top of a 12 hour work day.

Some have experienced the near-death of the virus, some have already lost someone from it and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it.

Others don't believe that this is a big deal.

Some have faith in God and expect miracles during 2021. Others say the worst is yet to come. So, friends, - we are not in the same boat.*

We are going through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different. Each of us will emerge in our own way from that storm.

It is very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance.

Not just looking, actually seeing.

We are all on different ships during this storm experiencing a very different journey.

Let everyone navigate their route with respect, empathy and responsibility.

Anonymous

Please look after each other. Be kind, be careful and stay safe,

Sent with my very best wishes

Mrs Sharon Edwards

Headteacher

