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Dear Parents and Carers,

This time last week we were preparing to open the school to all children for the start of Term 3. Having read the DfE contingency plans that state schools would only ever shut as an absolute last resort, the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday evening came as somewhat of a shock – especially in regard to the pace of the closure. I am sorry that we were unable to open to anyone on the Tuesday but there was very little chance of us being able to organise the school with the timescale given.

So here we are again with a school that is only open to the children of critical workers and vulnerable children; everyone else is at home doing 'home learning'.

Home Learning

The expectations for home learning is that pupils in Key Stage 1 should do three hours a day. In Key Stage 2, the expectation is that they should do between three and four hours. This includes everything from live interaction with the teachers, watching videos that they have been directed to and doing any follow-up activities that have been set. It is also vitally important to keep reading going every day. Teachers can be contacted between 9am and 4.30pm on their working days. If they answer you beyond this time, that is their decision.

We know that home learning can be extremely difficult for everyone. Limited access to devices, especially in households with more than one child is a huge issue. The Department for Education has provided the school with the grand total of five devices to hand out to those without access to a device. We hope to receive some more soon.

Did you know that if your child has an Xbox One or a PS4, they can access their home learning on these? If this helps, there is some information on the school website to help them do this.

The BBC has today launched a schedule for home learning on CBBC, so you may also want to utilise that within your daily routine. However, it is important to prioritise the learning set by the teachers.

We are also very aware that many of you have to work from home, and that the demands of your own job can clash with home learning, causing additional stress. If this is the case, please make your child's teacher aware. I think that we all have to find a balance if we are to get through this.

We know that home learning is, for most people, quite challenging on many levels. Many of the teachers are also having to 'home learn' their own children as well as be live with their classes. I'm sure many of you have enjoyed watching some of the

chaos observed so far!! We are also finding our way through this new world and looking for better ways to do things that ultimately benefit the children.

Free School Meals

We are still waiting to hear from the DfE about the voucher scheme for Free School Meals. As soon as we hear, we will let you know. From past experience, vouchers are delivered through email so please let us know if your details change. We expect the vouchers to be £15 per child each week.

Are you eligible for Free School Meals?

I know that some of you may have lost your jobs during the recent months. Please can I urge you to check if you qualify for Free School Meals. Your child may be eligible if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If you think that you might qualify, visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Critical Worker Groups

You may have seen in the news that there is concern about the number of children being sent into school, and we have definitely experienced increased demand from last year. To limit the chance of a case in school closing a bubble down, I urge you to only send eligible children into school if absolutely necessary in order for you to attend your work. If a bubble had to close, this could have serious complications for some of the parents being able to go to work, especially those working for the police and NHS.

I will write again soon with any further updates. Please stay safe and we hope to be back as soon as we are able to be.

Best wishes,

Mr Waller