



Leppington, Birch Hill, Bracknell, RG12 7ZX
Headteacher: Michael Dillon B Ed (Hons) MA

Friday, 17 April 2020

COVID-19 Update 17th April

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you are all keeping well and were able to get some quality family time over the Easter holidays. As you know, school remains closed and is only open to Key Workers and vulnerable children. On average we have about 15/20 children on a daily basis. We expect this to slightly increase over the coming weeks as children come out of self-isolation and Key Workers are able to go back to work. In my last letter, I explained that staff are on three-week rota either in school, working from home or taking some 'holiday'. We have now completed a whole cycle and all the teams have been great.

Easing the Lockdown restrictions and schools reopening

You will have seen that the Government announced last night that the lockdown will continue for at least another three week. When the government begins to ease these restrictions and we have more information we will let you know. You can rest assured that we are keeping abreast of the situation. We hope that we will be able to see the children before the end of the school year.

Free School Meals

We have now closed our kitchen and written to parents today with some information about the new national voucher scheme. We have been able to order our vouchers, but parents will have seen in the media that this system has been blighted with technical issues and we are concerned that this will have an impact on parents' access the vouchers.

If you think you may be eligible for benefits, based on free school meals, you can check the eligibility criteria and make an online application using the link below. The Local Authority will check your claim and notify us whether you are eligible or not and we will notify you of the result.

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-meals/how-do-i-apply-free-school-meals>

If you have any questions about free school meals, please email secretary@birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk

Reception places for September

Thursday was National Offer Day for Reception places. If you received a letter confirming your place, we will be in contact with you about arrangements for September.

Home Learning Packs, Resources and Videos

We will be publishing the Home Learning Packs again on Monday; as before, there will be some printed copies in the office if you need to collect them.

The format for these will remain the same as before Easter. As you know, we have also recently purchased Purple Mash and I sent out generic logins before the Easter holidays. Mrs Lacey has now sent out individual logins to all parents.

Teachers will direct children to particular activities and in the coming weeks begin to set specific home learning activities using the 2Do function. Children can also upload work and teachers will be able to acknowledge this. As I have said before, Purple Mash will complement our Home Learning Packs – not replace them.

Please read the online help guide. Any questions related to Home Learning please let us know via homelearning@birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk

Expectation of Home Learning

We fully recognise the pressures parents/carers are under at this time; trying to work from home, manage home learning alongside potentially caring for vulnerable loved ones. The Home Learning packs and material is there to help and support you. There is no expectation for you to complete this work. We would encourage you to try and get into a routine that works for you and your child/ren. If it is helpful, please send any work to us so we can post it on our social media.

Next week's theme is the environment. We have introduced weekly short video messages from one year group teacher, who will introduce the home learning for the week. I also know some year groups have set up unlisted youtube accounts where teachers are reading a class book.

Well-being Resources

We have been updating our well-being resources with a range of activities, stories and further links. Please see

<https://www.birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk/page/?title=COVID%2D19&pid=134>

<https://health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/health-at-home/>

Staffing update

We welcome Lauren Kaye as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA); she will join us once the lockdown is finished and join the HLTA team with Mrs Shiva and Mrs Lindsay.

At the end of the year, Miss Culverhouse will be leaving us to join a small local school closer to home. Although she has only been with us for a year, she has had a big impact and will be hugely missed. We wish her all the best for the future. We are advertising for a replacement now.

Please stay safe and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Dillon
Headteacher