

Fairhouse Primary School
Long Riding, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1QP
Head Teacher: Mrs K Hamilton
Deputy Head: Mr M Davie



6 January 2021

Dear families

You will be aware that on Monday 4 January, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, which has now come into effect. Full details of the lockdown restrictions can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home.

This central Government decision does not suggest that schools are no longer safe places for young people. Instead, limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households.

The new restrictions mean that schools will remain open only for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children to attend on site. All other pupils and students will receive **remote education until February half term and must remain at home**, in line with national guidance. I have set out further details below.

I understand this will not be welcome news for many parents and carers but it is absolutely essential if we are to successfully protect the NHS and reduce the transmission of the virus. In this area, we have witnessed the growing pressure on our NHS hospitals and the wider health system during the past few weeks. Last week a major incident was declared for our hospitals. The county is not yet through these pressures, and our colleagues across Health and Social Care are working tirelessly to ensure the viability of our health services.

Children of critical workers

Schools are remaining open to the children of workers who are critical to the COVID19 response and EU transition, who are unable to safely stay at home.

We need to ensure that the number of children and young people accessing the offer of provision in a school or college is kept to the lowest number possible. Therefore, even if you are a critical worker, if your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, on some or all days, then they should. Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role.

The list of critical workers can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision

If you do request a place for your child due to your work being critical in the response to covid, you will be asked to complete a critical worker request form and to verify your critical worker

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E-mail: enquiries@fairhouse-pri.essex.sch.uk

Web: www.fairhouseprimaryschool.co.uk



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status with your work ID or a letter from your employer as to why you personally are critical to the COVID19 response or EU Transition. If there is an alternative adult such as partner or second parent who is not a critical worker, you may be asked why your child(ren) are not able to stay at home as per the Government's guidance. If the other adult is working at home or able to take leave from their non-critical job, this will be deemed as a safe alternative.

We are open to provide care to enable critical workers to respond to the crucial role you will play in the response to the COVID-19 emergency, but you must also support your school, setting and college and only use this offer of support if you have no alternatives for childcare for your child(ren). Clearly the more children and young people that attend an education setting, the wider the risk of spreading the virus grows.

Vulnerable children and young people – including those with education, health and care plans or a social worker

If your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and/or an allocated social worker they may attend school. If you do decide to keep your child(ren) at home and you need additional support, please contact school and we will work with the local authority to support you.

Government advice on leaving children unattended

There is no law about when you can leave your child on their own but it is an offence to leave them alone if it places them at risk. As parents, you should use your judgement on how mature your child is before you decide to leave them at home.

If you are at all unsure, the NSPCC recommends that children under 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time, children under 16 shouldn't be left alone overnight and babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone.

Details of support and childcare bubbles can be found here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#support-and-childcare-bubbles

Remote learning:

Your children) will all have access to our digital remote learning offer. Our digital learning platform is Purple Mash. On this platform, teachers will set daily work, as if your child is in school, and will be able to provide feedback to your child on the work they complete and submit. On this platform, you will find lessons that have been recorded by the teachers for your child to watch and learn each day. There will then be a follow up task for the children to do and engage with. Most of the time, the lesson videos will be your child's class teacher but they may be the teacher from the other class in the year group and occasionally may be a

video form a well-known reputable scheme. The digital learning platform is the best alternative option as the taught lessons are important to your child's learning.

Having recorded lessons means that if you have more than one child and are having to share the computer/laptop, your children can watch the lessons at a time in the day that works for you/them and allows them to share the screen at different times.

We are still working through allocating laptops to families who require one. Where these are not collected soon, we will be re-allocating them to other families who have requested them. Please remember that we also have a number of data-only SIM cards that we can give to you if you have difficulties with access to data for on-line learning. Please get in touch if you would like one of these to help you with access to data.

If you do NOT wish for on-line learning and require a hard copy pack, please let us know as soon as possible. These packs will be made up every two weeks and can be collected from our school office. These learning packs need to be returned once completed, ready for the new learning pack to be collected each fortnight.

It is so important that your child(ren) keep up with the remote learning. This remote learning is a continuation of our planned curriculum. If they do not complete it, they will be missing out on developing their knowledge and skills and we want to ensure we do everything we can to prevent gaps in knowledge and learning so no child falls behind. If you require any support or guidance with remote education, please do get in touch and we will do what we can to support you and your child(ren). Likewise, if we have any concerns about the engagement, we will be in touch to let you know and see if there is anything we can do to help.

Keeping safe on-line

It is more important than ever that your child(ren) know how to stay safe on-line. Each week on purple mash, there will be some information or a quiz for your child to remind the how to keep themselves safe on-line. In addition, we will send out regular tips and information to you as parents as to how to ensure your child(ren) keep themselves safe on line. There is also much information on our website for you around e-safety. Please do take a visit as there is a lot on there to help you know the tips and strategies. If you require any of this in a printed, hard copy version, please do let us know and we can print this for you to collect.

Keeping in touch:

Our teachers can see who is engaging with the remote learning on-line and can provide feedback to your child through this platform. In addition, we will be making calls home to you to check how your child is doing, how you are all getting on and to see if there is anything we

can do to help. This call may come from a withheld number from time to time but if we do not get a response, we will call from the school telephone line or send a studybugs message to you. Please do respond to that message so we know you are ok – or to let us know of anything you would like help with.

We recognise that this is an anxious time for our children and families. If there is anything we can do to help, please do get in touch via studybugs or by telephoning the school office between 8.30 am and 4.00 pm. Please note that we are working with a skeleton staffing in school and may not be able to answer your call first time or get back to you as quickly as we might usually do, but we will do our best to get back to you and help wherever we can.

Free school meals

Any pupil that is eligible for benefits-related free school meal or who has a child in Reception, year 1 or year 2 who is attending school as a child of a critical worker or as a vulnerable child, will receive their free school meal in school. We have a reduced menu option that we will share with you each week. Children attending school who wish to purchase a meal can do so if they wish.

If your child is entitled to benefit-related free school meals and is not attending school, you will be issued a free school meal voucher via Wonde. This is being organised as we speak so please bear with us while this is being processed. We hope to have the vouchers to you by the end of this week, if not the beginning of next week.

We do not underestimate how difficult this period of time is for our families. Please do get in touch if there is anything we can do to help. It may just be that you need to talk to someone. We will do our best to listen and to help seek any additional support we can for you and your family. We are a great community and we are in this together!

Take care and I will be in touch again soon

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hamilton