

Millhouse Primary School & Nursery

Tavistock Road

Laindon

Essex

SS15 5QF

Tel: 01268 543584

Email: admin@millhouse.essex.sch.uk



Millhouse
Primary School and Nursery

Headteacher: Mr G Allen

6th April 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

School Closure – Communications & Information Update

As we move into the third week of closure, we are beginning to work out different ways of working and seeing how we can improve or change things to make them more efficient and useful. We are all getting used to working in a way that is totally alien to most of us and it will take time to totally adapt and find out the best way of doing things (this applies to parents, pupils and staff). We want to update you on how we are currently managing communications between school and parents as well as our plans moving forward.

Staff Remote Working

To ensure we keep our staff safe, our school is closed with access only to certain areas while we conduct a deep clean. Only those members of staff who are on duty to deliver reduced provision to the children of critical key workers are in school; all other staff are working from home, including the office staff. This means that the school phones will not be answered. However, the office staff are checking emails every day (with the exception of the Easter break) and will respond to or forward emails to the relevant members of staff. For safeguarding and professional reasons, staff have been instructed not to use their personal phones to contact parents unless they can ensure their number cannot be identified. Key members of staff have been set up to call parents securely to undertake welfare and safeguarding work.

Free School Meals

A letter was sent out last Friday to explain the government's new system. We have already received a lot of emails from parents regarding eligibility and are dealing with these as quickly as we can. This system was only sent out to schools late last week and there were some teething problems from the DfE end so we apologise if you feel that you should receive a FSM voucher but haven't done so yet; we ask for parents' patience and can assure you that all requests and queries will be dealt with.

Online Learning Communication

We understand that a number of parents have been trying to contact teachers via the Google Classroom platform. When we set up this remote learning system it was brand new to us and we are still learning how to use it effectively ourselves so apologies if you feel we have been ignoring you; this is not the case. We set it up initially to allow teachers to upload activities that the children can complete at home and disabled the comments section until we were satisfied that this could be done safely and appropriately.

We recognise that having some form of communication between teachers / parents / children is important and over the next couple of weeks we will be working on ways in which teachers can comment on some of the children's learning that is uploaded as well as be able to send messages / emails to keep in contact with each other. Again, for safeguarding reasons, this needs to be done carefully and has to be able to be monitored in some way. We aim to have this ready during the week beginning 20th April and we will let you know as soon as it has been set up. In the meantime, please do not be offended if teachers are not commenting or replying to messages; some teachers may be able to

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do this and we are using their knowledge and expertise to work out our systems but others are just doing what we have asked until we know how to do more!

Other communications / information

From the week beginning 20th April we will start sending parents a regular newsletter. This will have an update on what is happening and will include useful information about learning, challenges, and celebrations as well as well-being information.

We are aware that some of the children left items behind on the last day we were open. Please be assured that everything has been kept together for each class (PE kits etc) and we will make sure that it is all returned to its owners when we re-open.

This week and next were to be the Easter Holidays and although staff may still be working from home or heading up our reduced provision in school during this time, we do not expect pupils and parents to carry on with the learning for the entire two weeks. There may not be as much uploaded onto Google Classroom for the next two weeks.

Please think about this time as you would a normal school holiday and enjoy time together as a family. Everyone needs a break, especially you as parents, and we don't want you to feel that you have to insist on home-schooling during this time. You are all doing a great job with your children and the children have done brilliantly to cope with the massive change of not being in school with their friends and teachers. We anticipate being in this situation for the long haul so it is important to pace ourselves and give ourselves credit when it's due and a break when we need it.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Stay Safe.

Kind regards,

Mr Allen, Mrs Haken & Mrs McGarry

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