



31 December 2020

Update on school return

Dear families

You may or may not have heard on the news that the plan for primary schools is for them to return as usual, except for those who are in areas where the infection rates are considered extremely high. Unfortunately, Basildon sits as one of the areas where infection rates are still extremely high. Therefore, the Government has directed that primary schools in this area should only allow children of critical workers and those defined as vulnerable to attend school from Tuesday 5th January 2021. For all other children, there will be remote learning on offer from Tuesday 5th January 2021. These local measures will be reviewed again by 18th January. As soon as there is any update on this, I will let you know.

We would like nothing more than to have all our children back in school but the safety of our children, staff and community must be our priority and we must follow the Government's guidance on this.

If you are a critical worker in the fight of covid-19 and you have no-one else at home that can supervise your child safely, you can request a place for them at school from 8.50 am until 3 pm each day – or the days which you need the support for. If you meet this criteria and you would like your child to attend school, please message us via studybugs to request this, letting us know your child's name, year group and your critical worker status. All parents who request their child to attend school will need to complete a critical worker status form and provide us with evidence of their status e.g. ID badge, letter from employer etc. These forms will be available to complete on 4th January from the school office. Please note, we will only be able to accept children who have requested a place and where the place has been agreed. Children who attend school will be expected to complete the same on-line work as their peers, which will be supervised by our staff members. These children will be able to attend school from 5th January and should continue to wear their school uniform.

During this period of remote learning, those pupils who are eligible for benefit-related free school meals will receive Wonde supermarket vouchers for the amount of £2.30 a day to cover from 5th January to 15th January inclusive.

In the last few days before Christmas, the Department for Education gave the school some laptops which we have been busy building with the essential software. The laptops are available for loaning to families without suitable technology to support the remote education at home. These will be prioritised to families who do not have access to technology and are in receipt of free school meals but there may be other families that do not have suitable technology that we can support with the loan of the school laptops too. If you require a laptop for your child's home learning, please get in touch and request one via our studybugs app. We will then get in touch from 4th/5th January and let you know if your request has been successful. Once they are gone, they are gone, so do not delay your request. Our on-line remote education offer is much better than a paper based pack as we will be uploading recorded lessons for the children to watch at home and then complete the follow up work, making the learning far more purposeful and impactful.

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Alternatively, we can provide home learning packs for children to complete at home – you will need to request this if you do not have the technology at home and are unsuccessful in requesting one of our school laptops.

Accessing the remote learning, either digitally or paper-based, is very important for your child so that they do not miss important learning and do not fall behind. We do request that you make every effort for your child to access the work set on-line or via a paper based pack. We will be monitoring their interactions online and will be requesting the completed work back on the children's return. Further information on the remote learning offer, please visit our school website for our parents' guide.

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 8.15 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.

Please do keep in touch and let us know if your child is unwell or if they develop any symptoms of covid-19. In addition, please let us know if anyone in your household develops symptoms of covid-19 or tests positive for covid so that we can keep our monitoring in place and we know who should/shouldn't be in school.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support this year – it has not been an easy one for any of us but you have all been fantastic in making adjustments with home learning, adjusting to new school routines, keeping us informed about what is going on with symptoms and testing and working together to help us all in this difficult period. I do not under-estimate how difficult any of this has been for any of you. Thank you!

Our thoughts continue to be with those whom are currently unwell and those critical workers in our local hospitals who are facing the most challenging situation.

I hope you all have a safe new year's eve and I wish you all health and happiness and a much improved new year.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hamilton