



9<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Colleagues

### COVID 19 – Academy Update

#### Home Learning/Materials

#### Free School Meals

#### Child Protection and Domestic Violence

#### Admissions

The third week of our Emergency Provision is nearing completion and the children accessing this have had the pleasure of Mrs Downes and her terrific team on the staff rota this week. Activities have been very creative and it has still been possible to take advantage of the good weather outdoors. Long may this continue!

Again, we would like to thank you all for your continued support and positive engagement with your children at home. We know juggling the responsibilities of working from home with child care is not easy and all your efforts to do this are greatly appreciated. The images and information that colleagues are receiving on 'Tapestry' from our Early Years families and now, those *already* beginning to come through on 'SeeSaw' from Y1 –Y6, are brilliant and show how creative you are being at home! They also help to keep the children and staff connected. There is no doubt we are a tightly bound community who are missing each other under the current circumstances.

The passwords for SeeSaw have now been distributed to all parents but we do know that some did experience problems in gaining access initially. Some parents may not have tried to do this yet as we did not intend to begin the activities until after the Easter holiday and that is completely understandable. However, if you have difficulty in gaining access, please do contact Mr Pool directly at [poolt01@westerton.org.uk](mailto:poolt01@westerton.org.uk) and he will try to resolve any problems quickly.

We understand that it can be tricky to find physical materials to support home learning at this time. To provide additional support for this, we are collating '**grab bags**' with essential resources such as exercise books and pencils etc. This will be available for collection from Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, at 10.00a.m. from outside the main school entrance. If the weather is poor, they will be in the main hall as the food parcels were previously. For families still in isolation, struggling to get to us, please do contact us at [office@westerton.org.uk](mailto:office@westerton.org.uk) so we can arrange to deliver these to you.

Families who are entitled to Free School Meals will be aware that the Edenred voucher system is in place and the second batch of vouchers were issued on last Monday evening. However, we understand there are issues with the E-codes at present and the company is struggling to address the high demand at this time. Please do make contact with us on our office email if you develop a need of further food parcels at this time. Do be assured we are trying to ensure that all urgent needs are met as soon as possible. It is worth clarifying that there is a difference between the Free School Meals entitlement through assessment of benefits and the Universal Free School Meal offer available to all KS1 and Reception children when the school is usually open. The latter is not available, as yet, during this time of crisis. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Sadly, we have been made aware by the Leeds Safeguarding Team that the current lockdown situation can have a negative impact on mental health and the numbers of **Domestic Violence** incidents are increasing. This, of course, results in the Child Protection concern, **Emotional Abuse** of children living in the home, seeing and/or hearing the abuse. This can be magnified further with no access to external support. As research tells us, when the stress hormone, **cortisol**, floods the brain of the foetus, baby or young child, the damage can be significant and prevent crucial emotional development needed for successful social maturation. The resulting behaviours can be very difficult to manage and a negative spiral ensues, ultimately narrowing life chances. Balancing the risks of this against the physical risks of contracting Covid 19 is not easy. Safer Leeds have updated their website to include useful information for all victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse and people delivering services. The link to access this vital support is as follows:

<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/domesticviolence/Pages/default.aspx>

Please do use this link if necessary and remember our Therapeutic Team can also be accessed by contacting:

[wellbeing@westerton.org.uk](mailto:wellbeing@westerton.org.uk)

Admissions for Nursery and Reception will be proceeding as normal, as at the time of writing this letter. The deadline for Nursery applications is the 20<sup>th</sup> April and the Reception national offer day is still the 16<sup>th</sup> April. If you have any queries about this please do email our office. Our Administrative Team are accessing the emails daily and the external post box. If any Parent or Carer was expecting an offer of a Nursery place and has not received it, please contact Mrs Edmondson via [office@westerton.org.uk](mailto:office@westerton.org.uk)

Please do enjoy the forthcoming Bank Holiday weekend as best you can, heeding all government guidelines. We do hope that with full co-operation, the lockdown can end sooner rather than later and we very much look forward to seeing you in the future. Until then we will continue to stay in touch with the updates and we do wish everyone a very Happy Easter!

Yours faithfully

Stephanie Makin

Principal