



Westerton Primary Academy

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Leodis
Academies
Trust



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Vice Principal: Mr T Pool B.Sc. (Hons) PGCE

27th March 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Colleagues

Covid 19 – Westerton Update

Firstly, I do want to thank you all for your considered responses to the Academy having to close. It has been a challenging week for us all and we know this will continue for some time.

The introduction of **social distancing** and the requirement to stay at home and avoid unnecessary journeys or social contact is well explained in the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

I would ask that parents discuss this with their children and ensure that they are observing the requirements vigilantly.

We are taking this opportunity to provide an update as to how Westerton has been operating this week and our plans going forward.

In line with government instruction, we have been keeping the **smallest number possible of skeleton staff on a rota**, from **all** staff groups to provide emergency child supervision for a very small number of pupils. These are children for whom both parents are crucial key workers, for example on the frontline of the NHS care and in our emergency services. Whilst having these children on the premises is a risk for them and our colleagues supervising them, it is a necessary risk which we know can help these parents continue their crucial work. The service will continue throughout the Easter break and parents who are eligible for this will be surveyed again next week to determine the specific days required. Many thanks to all our extraordinary team for their organisation and participation in this provision.

Many parents did request an emergency place, as different key workers, struggling to find alternative child care. However, the vast majority of these have been able to engage **alternative parental/carer support** or **negotiate with their employers** to work from home. For this we are extremely grateful as the reduction in numbers had made the **social distancing** of children and staff in the emergency provision more possible. The quest we must all have is to **stop the spread** of the virus, whatever the weather. For this reason, I would implore all parents and carers who have managed their support so well whilst the sun has shone this week, to please keep doing so when it stops as it inevitably will.

The on-going emergency does mean that **Health and Safety** has to be our **top priority**. This can be difficult to balance with the complex needs of vulnerable children, who benefit from routine provision and, due to Social Emotional Mental Health needs, may need restrictive physical intervention. Social distancing for health does not allow for this and our Senior Managers discuss each case with parents and carers individually. We do wish to thank those concerned for their support and understanding with this.

Our families whose children are entitled to **Free School meals** in line with their receipt of benefits have had food parcels delivered to their door. Our thanks go to the colleagues from our catering team and volunteers in ensuring this service was provided. Going forward, we will be confirming information of the national voucher scheme and will provide details of how to access this, perhaps through Parent Pay. I do need to reiterate that we have been alerted to a number of **scams around FSM** and confirm that the Academy will **NEVER** ask for bank details.

We know that some families may find themselves in **hardship** or becoming eligible for free school meals due to changes in circumstances. We would ask that you email us at office@westerton.org.uk if you need this support. I would like to thank our extraordinary administrative team who are monitoring the emails constantly to prioritise urgent need. Likewise, such circumstances can lead to emotional distress. Our Therapeutic Team has established a new email: wellbeing@westerton.org.uk to support those in need during this time. Many thanks to Mr Eustace and Mrs Sayers for this remote provision.

During this extended school closure, pupils are still encouraged to complete work from home. Mr Pool is establishing a home learning app with which children will be able to connect following the Easter break. I would like to thank all our teachers for their continued work ensuring that our children can work remotely.

As children are now spending more time online, please remember to monitor their usage to keep them safe from online abuse and unwanted contact. Links to information and support around online safety can also be found on our website and this link <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/>. We continue to recommend that phones and other devices are not in bedrooms overnight. If any issues arise, apps will have reporting mechanisms built in. There is also the option of reporting directly to CEOP. The Academy will still remain a point of contact for support should you require it and serious concerns will be reported to the Police.

Finally thank you again for all the lovely messages that you have continued to send to school and to staff. These are very much appreciated. Life is very tough for so many of you at the moment so please do take care, keep in touch and know that Westerton and Leodis will do everything it can to support you and your families through the next few weeks. Please stay safe and look after each other.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Makin
Principal