



Westerton Primary Academy

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Trust



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1st May 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Colleagues

COVID 19 – Lockdown Update

Okay, so what was I saying last week about good weather? Hmm. Never mind, even with the rain, the government updates are beginning to show glimmers of hope. Whilst we still do not have any specific news to report regarding re-opening plans, we are trying to be optimistic that it will be coming soon.

Emergency Provision

As the lockdown continues, in line with government expectations, we are doing everything we can to keep our numbers of children and staff on site to an absolute minimum, therefore limiting our exposure as much as possible to this deadly virus. We do want to add our thanks again to those of the nation, for those parents using our Emergency Provision who are **both** putting themselves at risk, as **critical key workers**, saving lives. It is our privilege to be able to provide child care for you when you have absolutely no other option and we are grateful for your service, as you are for ours.

We are also aware that the shift patterns of both parents do change due to the sudden absences of their colleagues and this may alter the needs for our provision, even at very short notice. To this end, we must continue to prioritise our places for the children of parents who are both critical key workers, who have no option to work from home, no alternative child care in the home and no other parent living elsewhere. Our survey helps us to plan up to some extent up to two weeks in advance but, due to the sudden impact this virus is having on health and work, the plan must change accordingly. This means our first priority parental needs for care must continue to take precedence. Thank you all for your continued understanding and co-operation with this.

Home Learning

Our teachers are delighted to see that so many more children and families are now accessing the home learning platform 'Tapestry' and the 'Seesaw' app. Numbers of responses are growing daily and your feedback is very positive and constructive. The work undertaken is very varied, creative and prolific. So much so that there are times when colleagues are struggling to keep up with all the submissions, there have been over five hundred submissions per day! Whilst the staff are aiming to view everything submitted by the children from their class, please do understand that it will not be possible to provide a written response to everything and we are working hard to evaluate the best ways to organise the tasks for the benefit of everyone.

The tasks will begin to be archived after two weeks so that they do not continue indefinitely. In line with parental requests, our teachers will aim to upload the tasks in the evening, for the following day so that materials can be prepared beforehand rather in the morning. Where possible, we will also aim to use a task per activity as this seems to be easier for the children to organise for themselves. Again, this development is in response to your feedback which has been very valuable. We fully understand that

many parents are also working from home and juggling this with home-schooling can feel stressful. Whilst we do need to hear from all our children regularly, please know that we are sympathetic to individual circumstances.

Videos and Wellbeing

We would all like to thank the children and parents who have created some very uplifting videos for the staff, in response to the one we sent last week. Just fabulous! We are now busy planning our next one and Mr 'Spielberg' Eustace will be putting this together for us soon. We await our instructions from him for lyrics and outfits, beyond that, I can say no more, you will have to wait and see!

Educational Visits

Unfortunately our educational visits for this term have had to be cancelled. The payments made will be refunded to parents as soon as possible and we appreciate your patience with this. There will be no further payments required for the London Residential trip scheduled for October as this has been postponed until, hopefully, the Spring term. Miss Booth has been in touch with parents about this with more specific details.

Writing Leader

We have been able to maintain some academy business as usual despite the lockdown. This is all largely done through video conferencing. Through an internal recruitment process, we have today been able to appoint Miss Henderson as our new Leader for Writing. Miss Henderson will be working closely with Mrs Dawson our Leader for Reading. Both ladies would be really grateful if the children continue to take opportunities to read and write at home during this period, keeping those crucial skills polished. Fingers crossed that it will not be long before they are using them again at school with us.

Please do continue to follow all government guidance for the safety of everyone and do enjoy the coming weekend. We believe the weather is going to improve so have the sun cream ready. (I will stop now before I jinx it!)

Yours faithfully

Stephanie Makin
Principal