

# Bushey Heath Primary School

Headteacher Penny Barefoot



**Respect, Encourage and Achieve**

11 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, I hope you are well and managing under these challenging circumstances. We know how difficult it is for our families, not just with dealing with the threat of Covid but in juggling work, childcare and remote learning.

## **Remote Learning**

As you may be aware, schools are required to have a remote learning plan in place so that any child who cannot attend school because of COVID-19 does not miss out on their learning.

This letter explains our plans for remote learning for children who have to self-isolate, or where local or national restrictions mean that children need to stay at home.

Our remote learning plan has been made with our pupils and their families in mind. We believe this strategy will work best for the children at our school.

The following [Remote Learning Programme](#) provides details of our plan. For example:

- Expectations of practice
- Year 1 to 6 remote learning programme agreement
- Early years remote learning programme agreement
- Feedback and marking guidelines during lockdown
- Online resources
- Off-line resources
- Roles and responsibilities of staff
- Staff working conditions during lockdown
- Primary pupil acceptable use agreement and E safety rules
- Technical support for parents and carers

## **What you will need at home**

Class teachers will have contact daily in accordance with government requirements.

Your child will need access to a device such as a laptop, desktop computer, tablet or smart phone. They will need a quiet space where they can work without interruption. If your child has been set project work, they may require paper, note-books, workbooks etc. If your child does not have any of the above, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help support you.

## **What we expect from your child**

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It is important that your child engages with home learning. When they do their work will be up to you, as we appreciate that family circumstances may make it difficult for your child to access a device during normal school hours.

If they are not engaging, with the learning, we will use the following strategies to provide additional support;

- Phone call home from the teacher
- Increased feedback
- Communication between parents and class teacher to increase your child's participation

## What you can do to help

It may present some challenges for you. We kindly ask your support so that we can continue to provide high-quality education for your child during this time.

Younger children in particular may need support in accessing online materials and staying focused with their remote learning. We ask that you help them as much as you can.

At the same time, we do not expect you to watch your child all day, and we would not expect parents/carers to get involved in remote lessons in place of our teachers. However, it would be helpful if you can take an active role in your child's learning by asking them about their day and what they have learnt:

- Try to encourage your child to be ready and dressed for the start of the school day and keep to their routine
- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends and make it clear when the school day is over, to separate home and school life
- Plan breaks and exercise in the day to keep your child active

## Live lessons

The School has received a number of emails concerning our decision not to offer live lessons. I understand several parents are disappointed with this.

At Bushey Heath, we pride ourselves on providing the best quality education to your children and we take pride in our work and constantly seek ways to make improvements. However, we want to explain more clearly to you the reasons for the decision not to deliver live lessons.

The School believes the best place for a child to learn is in school. We do not believe that remote learning can replace high-quality teacher-led learning or replace the social skills that children gain through social interaction with other children. Our priority has been to ensure that the School remains open safely to the maximum number of children allowed by the Government, allowing our key worker parents to carry on their vital work.

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Bushey Heath has committed to ensuring that a class-teacher teaches each 'Bubble' in school. This is partly because the classes can include our most vulnerable pupils, but also because we have (and have had) a significant number of children in school (currently 50% or over in some classes and 39% of our total pupils). In this way, we differ from many other schools.

The classroom experience cannot be replicated by a live or recorded lesson. Methods of teaching have changed significantly over the last 20 years and those strategies which have been researched as being highly effective cannot be utilised via video. The model that some of us as parents are used to, teacher talking to us and "telling" us stuff, also does not match the research driven approach to teaching and learning at our school. For example, the Education Endowment Foundation, states that "Collaborative Learning" is a highly effective teaching and learning strategy which cannot be easily replicated in a video lesson. The National Education Union stated, "Online lessons are not desirable for primary children as the teacher – pupil interaction is not easily replicated."

Teachers are given sufficient time to ensure Google Classroom continues to follow the new curriculum and to cover areas that are taught in their class and teachers continue to look for ways to increase the 'teacher voice' on Google Classroom.

For more details of areas covered by our curriculum please follow this link: [Curriculum](#)

As we go into the second lockdown; we have evaluated our provision and adapted work accordingly and will continue to do so as we go through the lockdown. We will not be moving to live lessons, but we will be making best use of recorded lessons produced by White Rose, Oak National Academy and BBC Bite-size. These will continue to form part of a blended and inclusive learning programme.

Your class teachers will be calling you to look at ways in which we can support your family. If you are struggling with any aspect of the Remote Learning Programme, please do not hesitate to contact the School.

## Staff

Please be reassured that my staff are all trying their best in difficult circumstances. I would like to thank you for your continued support, and I would particularly like to thank those of you who have taken time out of your day to send kind messages to my staff. These messages mean a lot to them.

My staff are working extremely hard and have been coping amazingly throughout this pandemic. Their commitment to keeping the School open and ensuring quality provision for those children that are not eligible to attend is a testament to their professionalism and loyalty to the school.

The School is trying to make children's experiences at school purposeful and exciting (as everyone else is, at home with their parents). As well as teaching full-time and maintaining Google Classroom they have been supporting many families who have significant challenges during lockdown. The School has also been involved in delivering food parcels to those that are entitled to Free School Meals.

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They have also been helping plan for the Government's frequent last-minute demands and requests, which are communicated through a significant amount of guidance, which takes considerable time to read and understand and which are received at the same time as parents are notified - so can take time to implement.

In addition to this, many staff have had their own children at home, as they are parents just like you. Some also have had to cope with other personal situations caused by the pandemic and they are supporting members of their family and friends who are extremely clinically vulnerable. The Bushey Heath Governing Body and I have a duty of care to them as well as your children. Therefore, we need to ensure that their workload is manageable and sustainable.

However, we are doing our best and will continue to look for ways to improve our provision.

There have been several critical comments circulating in one or two of the year WhatsApp groups. I would remind the administrators for those groups that they have a responsibility for the content. As parents and carers, you have all signed the Parent Home School's Safety Agreement that commits you to following the School's approach to online safety and not upload any text that could upset or offend any member of the school community or bring the school's name into disrepute. You have also committed to ensuring that your online activity would not cause the School's staff, pupils or others distress. When a class teacher is the subject of a WhatsApp discussion, I can assure you, it causes them distress.

I politely request that, if you have a concern, you approach the School directly, via the office, and we will do our best to address and resolve the issue without the need for a WhatsApp discussion.

And finally:

I would like to end on a positive note. I have seen, during the last year, terrible events can bring out the best in people - whether it is in the form of the resilience of my staff, the kindness of the parents, the good-humoured enthusiasm of our children or the support from my Governors. We count ourselves lucky that we can help keep our local community functioning. I would like to thank you all and promise to continue to try and do our best for you and your family.

Please keep in touch with us and do let us know if you are having any difficulties with the remote learning, or if you have any questions.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards  
Penny Barefoot  
Head Teacher