



IGHTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

4th January 2021

Dear Parent,

I hope you and your family managed to have a good Christmas despite the impact of the ongoing pandemic. All my best wishes, on behalf of everyone at the school, for 2021.

Introduction

As I'm sure most of you will be aware, there has been extensive coverage about schools and education in the media over the last week or more. Depending on what you choose to read or listen to, you will undoubtedly have formulated your own opinions about what was likely to happen come the start of the new term. For example, on Tuesday 29th December, the Times Educational Supplement website carried a report that all primary schools in England would fully reopen following a high-level meeting within government. Of course, by late Wednesday afternoon, we were informed by the government that some primary schools would only remain open for key worker and vulnerable children. It is important to note that this was a decision taken at government level and not by individual schools or, indeed, Local Authorities.

This is the position we now find ourselves in, and it appears that the earliest date the school will fully reopen will be on Monday 18th January. This will be based on a review by the government prior to that date. I shall, of course, endeavour to keep you up to date with any news as and when we receive it.

I am very aware that there has been much confusion, not just within our own community, but across the county and indeed the country, as a result of much contradictory reporting, ambiguous wording, and genuine misunderstandings. As a school, we will do all we can to keep you as informed as we possibly can. I must implore you to avoid believing what you read on social media such as Whatsapp and Facebook, and know that we will try to give you the information that you need. I read a news report online a few days ago, and underneath there were over 2,000 comments. There were so many misunderstandings, and there is a real danger that what is said on these forums become "fact".

Learning at Home

I feel it is extremely important that I reiterate what I said back in March 2020. Everyone's circumstances are different.

Please, please do not feel anxious about your child working at home. There is absolutely no pressure on you, from us, that your child completes a set amount of work. We are providing work for you to share with your child, but there is no expectation that it must all be completed from the school. Anything that you do with your child will be beneficial. Reading and talking with your child is incredibly valuable. There are reading lists on every class webpage, so do look at those for ideas. If you feel you have not achieved anything, don't worry – sometimes children are more receptive to learning than at other times. Be kind to yourself and don't expect to achieve miracles. Enjoy the small things your child achieves.



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If some of the work is too difficult – or too easy – for your child, please do feel free to adapt it. You do not have to stick rigidly to what has been set. The class teacher would usually be carrying out ongoing assessments during a lesson, and would adapt the work accordingly.

We shall do what we can to support you. We shall be reactivating our class email addresses (e.g. Year1@ightham.kent.sch.uk, Year4@ightham.kent.sch.uk and so on. This should be your first port of call if you need any additional support. I do ask that any emails sent are done so in a respectful manner, as the overwhelming majority were during the first lockdown. I know that teachers would also be extremely grateful if emails are able to be sent during the working day rather than late into the evening.

Book Packs

A pack of books has been prepared for every child and you will be able to collect these from the Oldbury Annex (formerly the old Scout Hut) on Tuesday (tomorrow). Separate information will be sent to you about these arrangements.

Remote Learning

Teachers will contact you directly to give you details of zoom meetings. There will be daily zoom contact in the morning to set up the work for the day with your child, and a short contact in the afternoon to further “touch base” with your child.

Work will be uploaded to the class page on the school website by 6pm the day before it is due to be completed.

During the first four days from 5th January we ask that you scan and return any work to the teacher that you are able to do via the class email address. Please don't worry if you don't have the facility to do this.

From week beginning 11th January, we shall be switching to Microsoft TEAMS. This allows for much easier uploading and downloading of work through files online. You will be able to upload your child's completed work so the teacher is able to mark it online. We shall be sending out more information about this, including usernames and passwords, later this week.

Please do be aware that a significant number of staff will be working in school full time to support our key worker and vulnerable children so please do not expect an immediate response.

Year 3

Please may I remind parents in Year 3 that Miss Richmond is joining our staff from the beginning of this term. This is an extremely challenging time for anyone to be joining a new school, and I do ask that you are particularly mindful that she is new to our community. I have absolutely no doubt that she is an excellent teacher and I welcome her to Ightham for the next stage of her career.

School Office

Please note the School Office will be able to take phone calls between 8.30am and 10.30am. Urgent queries **only** should be sent to admin@ightham.kent.sch.uk
These will be answered in due course.

Safeguarding Concerns

If parents have any safeguarding concerns during our closure, please email us at the following address – safeguarding@ightham.kent.sch.uk

If the situation is **urgent**, such as a child being at immediate risk, you should contact the Front Door on 03000 411111. If it is out of hours, their number is 03000 419191. This information is also on the Safeguarding page on our website.



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Kind regards,

Mr D Sherhod
Head Teacher



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