

Bishops Down Primary School & Nursery



Parent & Guardian Update During School Closure no.1

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Well it has been an unusual week here in school and I am sure you have experienced many new challenges as well!

The teachers have been getting to grips with new technology, planning extensively and checking the work they are receiving from pupils. We know that we are far from perfect in our delivery of home learning at the moment but we will be having weekly meetings with teachers and the admin team to see how we can improve things for you as parents going forwards. Some feedback already suggests there is too much for children to do and parents are finding it difficult to organise with more than one child wanting to use a tablet/laptop. Please can I reiterate, the work is there if you want it, it is not compulsory to complete it all, we do understand the practicality issues home learning is bringing up. Many of our teachers are parents too and so are having to supervise their own children's work as well as planning and marking for their class, not easy! I will let you know next week if we are changing the format of the home learning in any way.



Beehive's Easter Holiday Play Scheme is now running for children of Key Workers only, free of charge. The list of Key Workers can be found on the Government website. We have invited other schools in Tunbridge Wells to use this facility free of charge for their local Key Workers if they cannot provide a service at their school throughout the holiday. We are advertising the free places on Facebook and Twitter so please share with other local parents if you know they are Key Workers

This week we have had anywhere between 3 and 14 children in school at any one time. This has been a challenge to staff, as you can imagine with the variety of needs, children's ages and limited staff due to absence through illness or having vulnerable family members they need to 'shield'. This week the Tunbridge Wells' Headteachers have been liaising with KCC to see if there are ways of creating Hub Schools after the Easter holiday, so the smaller schools with fewer staff can fully close. The Headteachers, safeguarding leads, Teachers and TAs of those closed schools can then rotate duties in these Hubs, therefore limiting their social contact. We are in the early days of these talks and a great many practicalities need to be considered. At this point in time, I don't know if we will be chosen to be a Hub after Easter. I will keep you posted.

I also wanted to make you aware that, since the Government announcement about schools closing, there has been an increase in social media posts from teachers, or people possibly posing to be teachers, offering to support families in a variety of ways. This includes offers of teaching and online tutoring or providing on-line support. This obviously is not regulated and open to risk when families are at their most vulnerable or in isolation. Please be extremely mindful of this and seek appropriate advice if/when you were to decide to make alternative arrangements for your children. The school is here for you and what we are providing should be meeting your children's educational needs.

There is also a scam email circulating purporting to be from the DfE asking people to provide their bank account details in return for Free School Meal money to be transferred to them. Please do not do this. Ellen Stock, our family support worker, has contacted all of our parents who are in receipt of Free School Meals and we are providing Tesco Vouchers for these families.



If families are in need of **foodbanks** at this time please contact Ellen Stock our Family Support Worker, who can make a referral on your behalf. This will be made in the strictest confidence: estock@bishops-down.kent.sch.uk

Ellen is also available for any parent to talk to over the coming months if you are finding yourselves in crisis, whatever the reason. She is on hand to listen and signpost to agencies that can support families and individuals at this time.



For families in self-isolation there is a local Facebook support group. It's called Culverden Community Forum and the link is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/202725757734372/about/>

I will be in touch with another update next Wednesday - officially the last day of term! Keep safe and thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Clare Owen, Headteacher