



Dear Parents/carers,

20.4.20

I apologise for another lengthy e-letter but we seem to always have lots to share with you! We hope you are well and that you and your families are safe and healthy.

Yesterday (Sunday), we were told that there are no plans to set a return to school date as yet. This means we will continue to adhere to government guidelines on staying home, while school continues to open to provide care for children of key workers, **only** in the event that there are no alternate arrangements available.

We will be in contact with our families at least weekly, going forward, but if you want to get in touch about anything you think we can do to help, please do. Teachers can be available to speak to, they are working from home where possible, but do come into school on a rota basis. As a reminder, our contact details are: ☎ 01429 836376 or 💻 hesleden@durhamlearning.net (left messages /emails **will be** responded to).

As another reminder, **Twitter is our main way of sharing news with our school family and community and it would be very useful for all parents / carers to follow us on Twitter @hesledenprimary** [please note, Twitter users must be 13 or older]. We are using Twitter to retweet useful and important links and messages and we try to update our feed several times each day. Some of the work and activities children have been doing at home have been shared (and can be seen at the end of this letter) and we'd love to see more!

Home Learning

As we have already mentioned/tweeted the government have produced guidance for supporting your children at home (link below), and online learning and video lessons etc. are now being made available. We would love it if you could help your children access some of these, but we understand that this may be difficult, or you might have other ideas for home learning.

In our last letter we said: *if children are reluctant to complete school-type-work, please encourage them to keep reading – it doesn't matter what they read, just read. Please keep in mind that this is an extremely unusual and difficult time and the single most important thing is keeping positive relationships in the family home. We will catch children up on return to school, whenever that may be.* I would reiterate this now. Our job will be to get children back on track, and that is what we will do.

In our previous letters we provided links to online learning opportunities – these are all still valid, but we are adding to this here ↓

Online learning:

BBC Bitesize - From today, you'll be able to access regular daily lessons subjects across the curriculum, in an expanded version of the BBC Bitesize website and also on special programmes broadcast on BBC iPlayer and BBC Red Button. We have tweeted links and timetables for this resource.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary>

Oak Academy – Also from today, video lessons will be available for children in Reception to Y6. This resource has been produced by serving teachers and have been to support home learning. The timetable for week 1 content has also been tweeted on our feed.

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

Other online learning resources:

The government released a document containing a lot of links for learning opportunities across the curriculum. Some links are for videos, others are for activity ideas, games and quizzes. We have looked at this document and listed below those resources we think are the most appropriate.

Reading / English

Lexia - All children have their own logins for <https://www.lexiacore5.com/>
If you need a reminder of this, or help with setting this up – please give us a ring.

Read Write Inc – phonics lessons on You Tube, includes story-telling – RWI is the system we use in the Early Years. <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/find-out-more/help-during-school-closure/>

We've been tweeting links to David Walliams' and Adam Bushnell's story-telling, but here is a link to more 'listening' options: <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

More links to authors reading their books. Other activities including games, drawing and quizzes. <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/>

We're also tweeting our *First News* and *Picture News* resources and links to help start topical discussions, and keep children safely up to date with the news – just as if they were in school watching Newsround.

We're hoping that children are practising their writing by keeping a daily diary.

Maths

This is a maths favourite in Class 1: Numberblocks (and other basic skills ideas): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/help-your-child-with-maths>

Puzzles and investigations for children of all ages to practice their maths skills and knowledge:
<https://nrich.maths.org/covid19>
<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games>
<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>

And don't forget, Class 1 children have their own logins for Ten Town; and Y2-6 children have their own logins for <https://ttrockstars.com/>
Again, get in touch if you're struggling with accessing these.

Other curriculum areas:

<https://spark.iop.org/collections/marvin-and-milo> - fun physics experiments
<https://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups> - ideas for physical activity

Advice and tips for parents of tots and toddlers:

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

Link to Government advice to parents to support home learning: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=b0838257-848b-4d77-b72f-37767d087fd1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Free School Meals

We think we are now up and running with the national voucher system for families who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Please let Mrs Medcalf know if you are having difficulties, or think your vouchers are incorrect.

Due to the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in, there may be families who are now eligible for benefits-related free school meals who weren't previously. If the current situation has changed your status, please let us know. Once we confirm this, we will be able to add you to the voucher system.

Music service

All parents of children who receive small group tuition from the peripatetic teachers (Mr Hind, in our school), should have received an email about online tuition so that music lessons can continue.

Please note – this is a Durham Music Service initiative, and not something we can help with directly. Use the link below to get additional information if you have not received your email.

<https://www.durhammusic.org.uk/webcam-small-group-teaching>

Through Twitter, some of you have shared the activities the children have been doing. We'd love for you to share what you're getting up to, whether it be school work, or other learning opportunities. Post photos and/or comments to www.twitter.com/hesledenprimary and we'll share them with everyone.

