



Pilgrims' Way Primary School

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Headteacher: Miss AM Middleton



15th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope you and your loved ones are all safe and well.

It has been an unusual start to the year and I would like to send my sincerest thanks to all of you who have contacted my staff and myself with messages of support. We really value your appreciation through this difficult time.

We expected to return in the New Year with everyone returning to our school community, how quickly things change! Following the government's direction, we all find ourselves back in national lockdown. Thank you for all your support with home learning, it has been really appreciated. My staff and I are committed to do all we can to support you and your children with home learning whilst continuing to support children who need to be in school.

There is a big debate within education and in the media regarding the pros and cons of live lessons. We have chosen not to provide live lessons each day. Rather, we strive to provide a range of high-quality resources – including an increasing amount of video instruction from teachers to underpin the learning tasks set. The main reasons for these decisions are that, from our communication with parents, we understand that in many of our households not every child has access to their own device and are often sharing these with siblings and parents, stopping children from being able to access regular live learning at a set time.

The last two weeks have been an incredible learning curve for all of us and we thank you all for your support in doing all you can to support your child's learning at home. The government have released further guidance regarding their expectations of the amount of home learning to be provided. They have indicated that Year R and KS1 should have 3 hours of remote learning per day and that KS2 should have 4.

I must stress that we really do recognise the stresses (many of my staff are parents too) that this situation places on you as parents and we thank you for all that you are able to do; we want to support you as much as we can. We are lucky that we have been provided with some additional laptops from the DfE and have already issued these to families. We have been prioritising families whose child does not have access to any form of device in the first instance as numbers of devices available are very limited. If you require support with IT (laptop) please contact us via the office or ClassDojo and we will do our best to help.

Please keep talking to us and working with us to provide the best possible remote provision for the children during such difficult and unsettling times for us all. We understand - and we are here to help.

If you need help and support, please contact us

- Your child's class teacher, through Dojo, if you need Home Learning support. They may be teaching in class and will respond as soon as possible.
- Our amazing Family Liaison Officer, Helen Fennell, is available to help and support, should you need it. Mob: 07840918699 or Email: helen.fennell@pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk or through Dojo.
- If you are not sure who to contact and need help, please contact the office 01227 760084 or office@pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk who will direct your question or concern to the appropriate person.

Benefits Related Free School Meal Vouchers

A text message will be sent early next week to all eligible parents with information on the next voucher which will cover Monday 18th - Friday 29th January.

If you do not currently receive the vouchers but think that your child might be eligible for benefits related free school meals, please contact the school office, or apply online at <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/>

Reception school places for September 2021

Application for September 2021 reception class places closes at midnight today (15 January 2021) if you have not made your application please contact the school office who will be able to help you.

Please continue to follow government guidance to ensure we all remain keeping safe and well.

My warmest regards to you and your families.

Miss AM Middleton
Headteacher

REMOTE EDUCATION 10 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

Remote education ensures continuous learning outside the classroom. For parents and carers, remote education isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote education experience.

1. TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

As a parent or carer, your school may have explained how remote education works already, but children may still need help. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.



2. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNICATION AND ONLINE ACTIVITY

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.



3. ESTABLISH A DAILY SCHEDULE AND ROUTINE

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.



4. ENCOURAGE SCREEN BREAKS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AWAY FROM DEVICES

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teachers will invariably advise on screen breaks; however, it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.



5. ENSURE YOUR LEARNING DEVICE IS IN PUBLIC SPACE IN THE HOME

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral, with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedrooms as this could be deemed inappropriate.



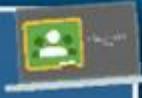
6. IMPLEMENT SAFETY CONTROLS AND PRIVACY RESTRICTIONS ON APPS AND SOFTWARE

Dependant on how your school implements remote education, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.



7. ENSURE YOUR CHILD ONLY USES OFFICIAL SCHOOL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.



8. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

Schools should have a policy on remote education that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.



9. MAINTAIN FEEDBACK WITH TEACHERS

Engage in communication with teachers where possible, and try to feed back progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.



10. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Remote education will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as they can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start to with, missing out on seeing their friends every day might take its toll.

