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Dear Families,

I hope you are all well and slowly adjusting to a new way of life. Hopefully it won't be long until some form of normality starts to reappear but at the moment we must be kind to ourselves, accept that we are all going through a very challenging time and we can only do our best. I am missing the children so much, in particular I'm missing the busy feeling of school and the noise of a school full of happy children. I know that the restrictions are necessary and hopefully we are closer to the end of the bizarre times we are living through. In the meantime, let's keep our spirits high, keep positive thinking and do our best to stick to the rules.

Thank you all so much for your support and understanding as we have moved towards learning from home. As a parent I understand those who are struggling with homeschooling, I want to thank you all. I appreciate how challenging it is (I am definitely not trained in delivering the year 10 curriculum - my eldest daughter has just started her GCSE year). We can only do our best to juggle all of these new tasks and expectations being put upon us. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can support you, either with the expectations of the work or if you need an IT device. We want your child to do as well as they can and for you to keep your sanity in tough times, so please reach out to us if you require anything.

It has been a joy to hear about and see the overwhelming majority of pupils taking part in their regular GoogleMeets. It is amazing how proficient our children (and staff) are becoming at these things. We will continue to evolve our procedures and the way we are providing our blended home learning approach, but do let me know if you want feedback. I have received a number of emails and phone calls from you which have overwhelmingly been positive, but your feedback is always very useful to me to shape our future provision.

### **What is our expectation of children's engagement at home?**

We are very aware of the many pressures that families at home are under having to support their children with remote learning, often at the same time as having to work themselves. We also understand that there is often more than one child trying to access Home Learning simultaneously who require help with the work or technology. It is not easy. In fact, it is incredibly challenging.

Schools are required to provide Home Learning to children for a minimum number of hours each day. There is an expectation that every child should engage but we are very conscious that these expectations must be realistic. Engagement with Home Learning does not mean that every single set task has to be completed every day. Some days, it may not be possible to do so - we understand that. Continuing children's education during school closure is important but so is maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of children and families. We can all only do our best.

### **Thank you**

I am very proud of our staff team who have had to adapt to a completely different way of working at the drop of a hat. They are working tirelessly at school for those children who are present and to provide the majority of children with remote learning opportunities that are closely aligned to the curriculum.

## **Updated guidance**

Earlier this week, the DfE updated their guidance to schools. They have now added a line into the Guidance that states “**parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.**” The guidance to parents says the following:-

*“Children and young people are eligible to attend school or college if:*

*‘At least one parent or carer is a critical worker, **and they can’t keep their child at home.** Critical workers are those whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID- 19) and EU transition response’ “*

When requests for a school place are made, I am asking parents to consider very carefully whether they send their children into school. I know the challenges many of you will be facing at the moment, supervising children may be just one of them; I’d like to thank you in advance for your support in limiting the number of children in school and subsequently helping to limit the risk of the spread of the virus.

I hope that the content of this letter offers a little encouragement and reassurance. Remember, we do not expect every piece of work to be completed. Do what you can. School work is important but so is keeping well, positive and sane in these very challenging times.

Thank you again for your continued support and positive feedback so far – the staff greatly appreciate it.

With my very best wishes,

Nick Conway