



# Eastlea update 8/1/21



Dear Parents / Carers,

What a week! Four days ago, I did not think I would be starting the process of providing weekly updates due to an enforced school closure. In some senses the fact that Eastlea is 'closed' still feels a very unreal situation! Instead of a 'normal' newsletter providing information about clubs, activities and events for this half term we are faced with a national lockdown as we do our bit to cope with the rapid spread of a more transmissible variant of the Covid-19 virus.

**THANK YOU** for your support with this challenging situation and your positive response to what must have been a very unsettling time.

## Children in school

Since the government announcement on Monday evening we now have a system in place in which we are providing emergency child care/support for the small number of pupils who have to still be in school. **Class sizes remain low, as we all attempt to heed the advice to stay home, protect the NHS, save lives and keep pupils/staff safe.** For those few who are in school at Eastlea can we remind you that:

- Pupils will be based in their class bubbles for as long as we can sustain this – if we have a positive Covid case then a bubble may have to close which will impact on the places that we can provide. **If you or anyone in your household develops Covid symptoms then you must inform school immediately, not attend school and seek a test.**
- Arrival and departure times remain the same for the class bubbles – one adult only per child is allowed on site at drop off/collection times, masks must be worn and we ask that you please use the 2m socially distanced markers and only enter the building if you have an appointment.
- School uniform is required for the children in school – **with extra warm layers recommended in these chilly times!** Water bottles are also required.
- School lunches are being served in school and we aim to keep this going as long as we are able to. A packed lunch can be brought for those who wish, but I want to keep providing a hot meal in these winter months for the children and would encourage them to take up this offer.
- There is no milk or fruit being delivered for break times. If children want to bring some fruit from home to eat as a break time snack then they are most welcome to do so.

*N.B. Parents who have paid for milk will have the money credited for the next term when we should be back in school.*

## Online/Remote learning for those at home

For the vast majority of Eastlea pupils who are completing online/remote learning again I have to say that staff have been impressed by how many have quickly got into routines with this and made a really positive start. **Thank you for your proactive approach to making sure the children are able to access what they need. If you have problems with this, then please let us know and we will do our best to help.**

Suggested activities for each day are uploaded by class teachers on either Tapestry or Seesaw and it is important that your child takes time to tackle this work properly (rather than racing through it!) and then responds/sends it to their teacher so that we can monitor what is being done and provide extra support where necessary. The tasks are often built up over a week, so it is best if they do some work every day.

**It is not easy for staff to be teaching children in school at the same time as they are providing online work for those at home. They will do their best to respond to your queries about the work, and may have provided a bank of follow up suggestions should your child want to do any extra but they will not be able to provide separate individual work plans for each child throughout every day. They may also be unable to respond IMMEDIATELY to messages from parents as I'm sure you will agree they need time to switch off too!**

Remember, if your child wants to do more, then they can also 'keep going' with the reading challenge (see below), Spelling Shed, Numbots and/or Times Tables Rockstars (as appropriate for their age).

### Helpful online resources/website suggestions

The list below may provide some useful links or suggestions to access for your child to supplement the work provided by school.

- **BBC Bitesize lessons** for all age groups are due to start from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January and can be accessed via the red button on your TV or on <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary>
- **PE with Joe Wickes** is back on Monday 11th January at 9am – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
- **Teach your little monster to read** free phonics and reading game – this can be downloaded as an app or accessed via the website and contains useful resources for Early Years and KS1 pupils.

### Rainbow Reading Challenge

After discussion with staff we feel that the children were so involved in the Rainbow Reading Challenge this year that we do not want to lose this momentum.

**Hopefully the children will enjoy continuing their reading at home and if they can upload evidence of them doing this then this will count towards their ongoing progress towards their bronze or silver awards.**



Your child's teacher will let you know via Tapestry or Seesaw how they plan to monitor this. We had a bumper crop of bronze awards before Christmas – so let's see if we can 'virtually' do the same for silver awards this term! **Please encourage them to keep reading!!**

### Competition Time!!

We would love to support the Eastlea community to 'stay connected' through these challenging times – and one way of doing this, which worked well before, was through our whole school competitions which involved all the children ...(and many of the parents!!)



**Our first competition has been suggested by one of our Governors and they have kindly offered to turn it into a fundraising venture too! As we embark on 2021 we would like the children to consider their hopes or wishes for the coming year. These can be portrayed in any format – writing, pictures, collages, poems, stories, models – or anything really!**

**Photos of what has been created can be uploaded to class teachers via Tapestry/Seesaw please BY MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY. For every entry received a £1 donation will be made to school funds by the Governor and there will be prize winners chosen from each class. Good luck!**

### Free School Meal vouchers

The information we have received so far from county is that vouchers will again be provided for those families in receipt of benefit based Free School Meals using the Huggg portal which seemed to be very successful over the Christmas holiday. The final details of how/when these will be distributed are just being finalised and I hope to be able to sort this out soon.

***N.B. For the few families who are entitled to vouchers and have their children in school – there will be the choice of having the vouchers and paying for school lunches/providing packed lunches for the days your child is in school; or opting to have school lunches provided and not having vouchers. I will be in email contact with those to whom this applies soon.***

### Keeping in touch...

Even though we are 'closed' to the majority of our Eastlea children, we will still be keeping in contact with everyone as best we can. This will be done via Tapestry/Seesaw and you know where we are if you need us! If we have not heard from you/your child for several days don't be surprised if you get a phone call from school just to check that everything is ok, as it is important that we stay in touch in these uncertain times.

Please look after yourselves, follow the national guidelines, take care and stay safe!

Miss E Beeston, Head Teacher

