

Eastlea update - 9/4/20

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the 'Easter weekend' this is a brief outline of what has been going on in school this week and other information updates. We have been grateful for all the messages/contact via Tapestry/Seesaw from parents and pupils which is enabling us to '**Keep in touch**' during the extended period of school closure. Please continue to do this, so that we know that everyone is safe and well, and don't be surprised if you get a phone call from me or a member of staff if we have not heard from you for a while. This is simply a chance to check that everything is okay and see if there is anything we can do to support.

Vouchers for families entitled to Free School meals

I have been immensely frustrated by the system of ordering vouchers for those families entitled to benefit based free school meals. Two orders have been submitted – one for the term time weeks and one for the holiday weeks (as the government extended their offer for vouchers last weekend). Unfortunately at the time of writing Eastlea parents have still not received any vouchers and I know this has caused concern. **I am very grateful for your patience in this situation – THANK YOU!** All I can do is assure you that there is no more that we can do as a school to speed up the allocation of vouchers. I have been told that the vouchers WILL be emailed out, but that the system is suffering from a HUGE national backlog.

School access/opening

There have been far fewer pupils requiring school access this week (as outlined last week). We have been open for two morning sessions for those vulnerable children/critical worker families who needed childcare and will do the same in the coming week – opening on the mornings of Tuesday 14th and Thursday 16th April with a much reduced staff. We are already aware that numbers will increase slightly from 20th April which is when the new school term should have been starting. If anyone else is eligible to have their child(ren) in school and has no other options for childcare then it is important that you contact us in advance to confirm, so that I can ensure we have enough staff available for supervision. We are obviously trying to balance remaining open for those who need it, whilst at the same time keeping staff safe too.

Online safety

This week we shared some additional links to provide advice about online safety. They are also included here for your reference – but to access the links it may be easier to either go to the post on the school Facebook page or visit the school website (in the Coronavirus closure section):

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Happy Easter

I know it will be difficult, but please try to enjoy the 4 days of the Easter weekend. Continue with the Easter activity grids which we provided if this gives a focus to the days for the children and enjoy any chocolate eggs which the Easter bunny may bring!! You may be interested to know that many of the eggs we had ready in school for the chocolate raffle/Golden Day activities are today being donated to staff at the Cramlington Hospital. We felt that this was the most appropriate thing to do in these circumstances.

Stay at home, take care and stay safe and well!

Yours sincerely,
Miss E Beeston, Head Teacher

