



#### Helmingsham Primary School and Nursery

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Dear parents/ carers,

Wow! I cannot believe that it has only been a week since the beginning of term. I want to say a really big well done and thank you to you all. We have had a brilliant response to the online learning facility and the live lessons. Most children have been able to access these and despite a few teething issues are joining in and learning at home. I also want to say a big thank you to the teachers, TA's and staff at the school who are making all of this possible. It is not an easy job to co-ordinate everybody and they are teaching in a completely new way too.

In a nutshell, I am incredibly proud of our school communities and the way everybody is working together to play their part in this new way of living and working, making life as normal as possible and doing our bit in the fight against covid. We have had some fabulous feedback from many families so thank you for those- it is really encouraging to know that although the children are at home, they are able to access teaching and learning- albeit very differently than any of us anticipated.

#### **Attendance for pupils who are participating in remote learning**

The government has sent very clear guidance to schools regarding their expectations for remote learning. There is a clear expectation that if pupils are not in school then pupils in EYFS and Key Stage 1 will have access to 3 hours of daily teaching, whilst pupils in Key Stage 2 will have 4 hours of daily teaching. Our schools offer this core requirement through the live teaching in the morning and set tasks on Google classrooms in the afternoon.

As a school we are monitoring attendance of virtual learning- by noting which pupils join and participate in the live lessons and also those pupils who submit work. If pupils are not regularly attending or submitting work, then the school will make contact to see if we can support in anyway (as we would if pupils were not attending school in normal circumstances.)

If you know that your child will not be logging in due to illness or medical appointments then please use the normal reporting method, by phoning the office and leaving a message on the absence line.

#### **Participation in remote learning**

As staff we thought it would be useful to clarify some 'Google Classroom Etiquette' and share some top tips.

- When joining a meeting please ensure that your microphone is on mute- this will stop too much feedback.
- Use the hand raise to indicate when you would like to contribute
- Try to save snacks for break time
- Try to make sure that the device you are using is fully charged or on charge
- Submit the work in the format asked by the teacher
- Be aware of what is happening in the background of your home classroom
- Ensure that work completed is handed in on the classroom- even if this is a photograph of your work. (Those with iphone/ ipads/ smart phone, can use the **notes** app to scan work too)

## Attendance for Key Workers

There has been some confusion and questions around whether different groups of children should be in school. We are aware that the number of recorded cases continues to rise and government have been sending regular updates in to school but these do appear to give conflicting advice. The most recent guidelines suggest that if it is possible for your child to stay at home, they should do so, even if you are a critical worker. This may mean that your children will be in school part time, around shift patterns etc. If this is the case, it would really assist us to know your requirements and the days you will need your children to attend school.

You may have seen in the press over the weekend that the Government has changed the guidance regarding the attendance of Key worker children. I have copied the latest guidance below as to how often these pupils should attend.

*"If a child has a parent who is a critical worker, it is for the parent to decide whether they are able to keep the child at home. We encourage parents to consider the spirit of the lockdown when making their decision. Only one parent needs to be a critical worker, and they may be working from home and still require their child to attend school."*

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/01/08/am-i-a-critical-worker-or-are-they-vulnerable-or-without-internet-access-or-broadband/>

*While parents and carers who are critical workers should keep children at home if they can, children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required.*

*Vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time- If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent [through illness or choosing to remain at home and access the online learning], the parent should let the school know.*

At the end of the day, it is your decision as to whether you feel that your child/ren should be in school. As staff, we will do everything we can to ensure the safety of those in school, both staff and children, within the perimeters of our risk assessments. Similarly, we will continue to provide online learning opportunities and resources to support the needs of all learners at home for however long we need to.

If you, and/ or your children need any additional support to access the learning, please do not hesitate to get in touch. There is no such thing as a silly question so please feel free to phone the school to ask, we are all learning together!

Stay Safe  
Kind regards



Stephanie Hawes