



**WESTGATE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Striving for Excellence • Caring for Children



We're working
towards Artsmark
Awarded by Arts
Council England

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Tuesday 17th March 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

COVID-19 and Support for Families

We are aware of a small number of families for whom the current COVID-19 and associated government advice presents additional challenges, so I'd like to provide some additional information for everyone.

Vulnerable Groups

Please make us aware via email or telephone if you or a member of your household is classed as being vulnerable to COVID-19 due to an underlying health condition, so that we can prioritise communication with you if need be. If you are unsure, please seek advice from your doctor or consultant. We can help with things like varying pick up and drop off times to enable you to avoid crowds in the playground and we will support any decisions to self-isolate if you feel this is necessary for your child(ren).

Food Poverty

Catering Leeds are currently making plans to ensure that children eligible for free school meals (not the universal infant FSM entitlement) will still be able to receive a meal every day in the event of school closure. In addition, if you are facing hardship, for example through loss of earnings, you can speak to me or Mrs Eley in confidence about a referral to Otley Food Bank.

Contingency Planning

We are now actively planning for the possibility of school closure, so that learning can continue in some form if we have to close school. This includes comprehensive planning for remote learning, taking full account of the many and various challenges this brings, and the limitations many families will face. It will **not** require families to try to replicate what a class teacher does each day. In order to support teaching staff to plan, all non-essential activities are cancelled, such as clubs and parents meetings. Thank you for your understanding in this. However, extra-curricular activities run by teaching assistants will *continue until the end of this week* to avoid unnecessary disruption. If you are unsure, please check the calendar on eSchools, which will be updated to show cancellations as necessary. We have also been notified that Y4 swimming is cancelled until further notice.

It is also essential that we have up to date contact details for all families, and that you can access the VLE. Further information about online resources will come out as necessary in due course. We are also planning so that a substantial amount of learning can take place offline, for children without online access or who may be sharing devices with other family members. If you have not completed the online survey about home internet/ device access, please do so by the end of the day as this will assist with planning.

As you might expect, we are facing reduced staffing levels as colleagues have to begin self-isolating, and managing a huge increase in ever-changing information and enquiries at the same time. Please bear with us as we manage this situation. At present our intention is to remain open until we are directed to close. However, we will also be monitoring safe staffing levels, so it is possible we may have to partially or fully close if these are compromised. Please be assured that this is something we will avoid unless absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your support and understanding, for school and each other, at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Carpenter', written in a cursive style.

Helen Carpenter
Head teacher