

3rd April, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We now have reached the end of the Spring Term where school and home life has changed for the majority of us. The news is becoming more worrying and it's in these times that we keep our loved ones close. We are concerned about the direct impact coronavirus maybe having on our families. It's an unsettling thought but if this applies to you or your family and you would like us to support your child through any difficult times, we have set up a dedicated email address where you can contact us and one of us will be in touch. Please use this address which will be monitored daily - even through the Easter holidays: support19@gilesbrook.co.uk

We are so proud of our pupils for all the effort they are putting into home learning. Some parents have however, expressed concerns that they are finding home learning difficult; many of you have only one computer in the family and are having to share, whilst also trying to work from home. Others are finding it difficult to motivate children. We are looking at ways to help with this, for example, providing more activities that can be completed in children's homework books. If you think of any other ways in which we can support you then please contact the school office and we will do our best to help. Please note, that teachers will not be sending emails after 5pm but will endeavour to get back to you at the earliest opportunity.

These are extraordinary times, and you have to prioritise your well-being and that of your children. Remember, you are your child's parents not teachers, so try not to put too much pressure on yourself. We understand how difficult life is at the moment and we encourage you to spend these next 2 weeks over Easter as a family, learning to be together and simply enjoying time together.

Thank you to all our key workers who are working hard to keep everyone safe. We are open over Easter for children whose parents are BOTH key workers. Please book on using Gateway. Those children whose parents are key workers and children of other identified groups may now use the booking system for places after Easter.

Home learning over Easter

We are not setting any formal learning over Easter but we understand that not being allowed out is going to present some challenges for our children and it's helpful for them to have a daily focus. We have put together a list of Easter Challenges (one or two each day) that is being sent with this email that you might like to complete with your child. It would be great if the children could post their successes on Twitter so we can all celebrate their achievements.

Online safety

Please be cautious about your child's use of other sites. The ones set by teachers are used by staff and children at school frequently. There are other sites available that are offering free services and resources, however not all sites can be trusted. Where children use sites such as YouTube at school, we have heavy filters protecting our children from unsuitable material whereas at home, these filters may not apply. Please be vigilant about what your child is accessing. Please remind your child about their E-Safety lessons in school and encourage them to visit secure sites that you have vetted yourself.

We are really enjoying seeing your child's achievements on Twitter but please can we also remind you not to add children's names if you are tweeting pictures. As part of our commitment to online safety, we cannot retweet all the great things your children are doing at home if your child is named.

Supporting our SEN children

The Local Authority has provided some advice for parents and activities for children on their Local Offer page. Or you can access it by clicking this link: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/send-local-offer/send-local-offer-parents/resources-fun-ideas-and-activities>

Playgrounds - A message from Milton Keynes Council

It has come to our attention that there are a number of parents across Milton Keynes who are still taking their children to play parks and playgrounds. Clearly, this is not safe for them or others. We would be very grateful if you could support us by sending the following message to all parents via text or email.

MK's playgrounds are CLOSED to limit the spread of coronavirus. Please do your part and stay away. Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (if you can't work at home). #StayHomeSaveLives

Free School Meals

During these challenging times, we want to make sure that all pupils who are eligible for free school meals (this does not apply to Universal Infant Free School Meals), can continue to access support if they are not in school. We have over the past two weeks supplied a packed lunch through Chartwells, which was available for parents to collect from school. Moving forward we will be using the government's facility to provide our parents with supermarket vouchers. This scheme was only launched by the government two days ago and we are currently working to ensure that these vouchers are available to our families by 20th April, the first day of term after the school Easter holidays. More details will be sent out to eligible families over the next two weeks.

Music lessons – a message from The Music Co-op

Dear Parents/Students,

We would like to send our best wishes to you all at this difficult time. We are sad not to be able to continue delivering your music lessons at present, but want you to know that we are very busy behind the scenes looking at ways forward with online teaching solutions to delivering your lessons. This is of course more difficult within primary school settings due to age limits on online platforms and the amount of paired/group teaching. We are working with your schools to see if we can continue to deliver lessons to you in the summer term.

In the meantime we want to encourage you to keep playing your instruments regularly and listening to music. We all know the benefits that music has on our health and well-being! You may wish to follow our MK Music Co-operative Facebook Page where we are hoping to keep in touch with you and post some useful tips and musical activities. Equally our partners at the MK Music Centre will be doing the same on their Facebook Page should you wish to follow them too.

Thank you for your support,
Mike James (Chairman) Clare Myers (Strategy Officer)

No-one has ever experienced an end of term like this one before. We sincerely hope that each and every one of you is doing okay. School is here to support you where we can and as mentioned previously, please get in touch if you think we can help in any way.

Have a good rest over Easter and we will see you virtually on April 20th.

Best wishes

Claire, Angie and Debbie