

24<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

A virtual warm welcome back to all our families in these extraordinary times. I hope everyone enjoyed a stress free two weeks with your children without the added pressures of home-schooling. As a parent myself, I understand how difficult it is juggling work and children at home and I am not ashamed to say that despite all my years of arguing with my kids about their overuse of the Xbox, it has now become a bit of a god-send in my house!

For the foreseeable future we are back to remote learning and I hope you are all back into the swing of using our website and Google classrooms as a tool for accessing all the work your children need. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your child's teacher if you need further support. Our teachers will be phoning you regularly to check in with you and your families and will do whatever they can to help you.

### **BBC Bitesize Daily**

The BBC have launched their new learning package - BBC Bitesize 'Schools off, Learning's not!' - known as Bitesize Daily. This is an additional resource which is really easy to navigate - just click on the year group you require and children can access short videos, activities and games for English, Maths and a range of curriculum topics.

### **Well-being**

With the best will in the world, we are all trying to keep life as normal as can be for our children but I am sure that despite all our reassurances and cajoling, home life can be a bit of a pressure cooker when we are all cooped up together (again, I know this from my own experience!). Please do not stress about schoolwork or let it cause arguments in your family. Stay calm, enjoy being with your children and we will help them get where they need to be when they return to school. The NSPCC has created a number of resources to support parents and carers during this difficult time. Topics include:

- Talking to a child worried about coronavirus
- Parents working from home
- Children staying home alone
- Lockdown and separated parents
- How to cope with tantrums and other difficult behaviour

The advice can be found on the NSPCC website here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents>

The Multi Agency Support Hub has also put together some really useful information on services that can help you in an emergency as we move through these uncertain times. The information pack includes information for support re food banks, domestic violence, mental health, educational online activities and lots more.

The information pack can be found at: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/assets/attach/65084/COLLATED-Covid-19-Support-and-Information-for-Families-April-2020.pdf>

Released this week: a free information book explaining the coronavirus to children, illustrated by Gruffalo illustrator Axel Scheffler | Nosy Crow. It can be read online or downloaded. <https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler>

## TT Rockstars

We have been invited to compete in the 4 day Big Milton Keynes Battle! There are almost 20 schools battling against each other. If your child has a TT Rockstars account, please encourage them to participate in this battle any time between 8:30am-7:30pm. It begins Monday 27th April and finishes on the evening of Thursday 30th April. This is a brilliant opportunity to secure those times tables facts and have fun whilst improving their fluency and rapid recall. **Good luck everybody, we can do this!**



## Twitter

It's so lovely to see you sharing pictures of your children and their learning on Twitter. Please remember not to include your child's name with their photo as in accordance with our online safety policy, we cannot retweet these posts. Thank you.

## Free School Meals

We are very aware that some of our families are facing financial difficulties right now. The government are offering eligible pupils £15 weekly food vouchers for each child if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Some of you may now have put in a claim for universal credit and if you think this applies to you, you can check your eligibility by clicking on this link: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims>

If you need any help with this then please contact the school.

## Sing Up - Song of the week

A link for the 'Sing Up' website has been put into Google classrooms. You will find a new song each week which your children can sing along to. This week, the song has been one of our school favourites 'One moment, one people' It's always good to sing and it would be lovely for the children to learn some new songs too - ready to share when we all get back together again at GBS! [Song of the week](#)

Have a lovely weekend - let's hope this sunshine lasts!

Best wishes

*Claire, Angie and Debbie*