



NEWSLETTER

29.01.2021

Prime Minister's statement on the national lockdown position

The Prime Minister announced on 27.01.2021, that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity.

If the Government achieves its target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15 February then those groups will have developed immunity from the virus around three weeks later - this is by **8 March**. It is for this reason that the government hopes it will therefore be safe to commence the reopening of schools from **Monday 8 March**.

Education settings, as well as students, parents and carers will be given at least two weeks' notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education.

Lockdown

WE HAVE NEVER FACED A SITUATION LIKE THE CURRENT PANDEMIC.

The new lockdown is because there is a new variant of Covid-19 that is spreading faster than others. This variant of the virus was first identified in Kent. Since early December it has increased rapidly in London, the East and the South East of England. Cases are still rising sharply in Greater Essex and hospitals across our region are near capacity. In the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce contacts outside households wherever possible.



WE ALL NEED TO DO OUR PART TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF COVID.

Department of Education Coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Phone:	0800 046 8687
Opening hours:	Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Limited attendance

Limiting attendance at schools and colleges helps to support the reduction in the overall number of social contacts in our communities, which is a vital intervention in the context of current very high transmission rates.

Schools and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. If your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and/or an allocated social worker they may attend their school or college.

The government's published guidance states:

- *"Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.*
- *Schools should speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school.*

- *If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip.*
- *Parents and carers who are critical workers **should keep their children at home if they can.***

Essex County Council has advised schools of the following:

- *“We need to ensure that the number of children and young people accessing the offer of provision in a school or college is kept to the lowest number possible. Therefore, even if you are a critical worker, if your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, on some or all days, then they should. Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role.”*
- *“If your child’s school or college feels that your role does not fit the critical worker criteria, you may be asked to verify this with a letter from your employer as to why you personally are critical to the COVID19 response or EU Transition or to keep your children at home.*
- *If there is an alternative adult such as partner or second parent who is not a critical worker, you may be asked why your child(ren) are not able to stay at home as per the Government’s guidance. If the other adult is working at home or able to take leave from their non-critical job, this will be deemed as a safe alternative.”*

It is important that we all take steps to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection to save lives and protect the NHS. Please consider the safety of you and your household first and foremost.

School attendance needs to be kept to the minimum, to safeguard both staff and pupils alike. Limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with others.



KS2 gate

A kind request, that we will be using the KS1/Reception alley walkway gate as an alternative, during lockdown, to using the carpark gate before and after school for KS2 children. It is becoming water-logged and slippery, posing a health and safety risk. Shoes are becoming very muddy too. Thank you for your cooperation in this regard.

Remote home learning

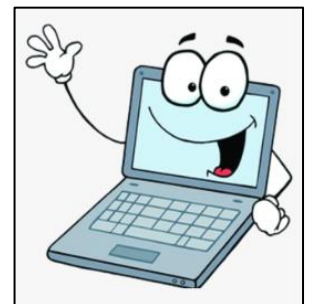
We will continue to provide home learning at home. Teachers are uploading work, video clips, links and worksheets on the school’s website weekly. We encourage family to make use of the email response to convey how things are going and to aid staff with monitoring assessment.

We acknowledge this is an extremely challenging time and not ideal situation.

Devices and digital platform

A few laptops are available to support home remote learning. Please contact the school office for more information.

Dr Walker’s Church of England School has indicated an interest to be using **Microsoft Teams** as the preferred digital platform.



Digital platform training for parents

ECC has forwarded the following offer to schools: **FREE Training on Teams session for Parents**

- *Is your child using Teams for remote learning?*
- *Are you frozen in fear about helping them as Microsoft Teams for Education is alien to you, and your child?*
- *Do you feel like it is just too scary to even try and get your device ready for them to use?*

Come to 2, two hour sessions where we will help answer any questions and give you a guided explore around TEAMS and any questions you or your child have. The first session will be offered online through ZOOM, just one click and you will be on, and the 2nd session we will get you online onto TEAMS, so you can experience what your children will access for their learning. This will open up doors for your children to learn, whilst remote learning is in place as well as help you to access online support that may be holding you back as a parent.

What have you got to lose? Give it a go!

To book follow the following links:

<http://bit.ly/trainingontteams4Feb>

<http://bit.ly/trainingontteams11Feb>



Weekly welfare calls

Teaching staff are making weekly welfare calls. For security reasons, telephone numbers are not shown.

Many thanks for keeping the communication channels open. We have received positive feedback. This is very helpful and much needed to also support staff's morale and wellbeing.

A few families have been hard to contact. Please contact the school office to inform us of a convenient time and contact number we can use to make contact.



Competition

We would like all pupils to make a drawing on one of the follow:

- I like my school
- Nature (e.g. flowers, animals, rainbow, etc.)
- Things I like to learn about (e.g. the 50 experiences in school)
- Living in the UK (e.g. buses, trains, Churches, Big Ben, London landmarks, etc.)
- School values
- British Values

Class teachers will make templates available as part of remote home learning. The drawings will be used for a mural to improve our school environment.



Closing date: Tuesday 23 February.

Red Balloon Foundation

“Red Balloon Foundation are delighted to be working with Active Essex (Essex County Council) to help families who normally receive free school meals or have otherwise been affected by COVID19 to get active, enjoy healthy nutritious meals and take part in lots of fun activities together during the February Half Term.

Families who live in the Epping Forest District can apply through RBF to take part in a FREE virtual holiday activity club for primary aged children, with a timetable of online activities and a family activity pack. Each pack contains a host of fun activity ideas and essential food items to create family meals inspired by Active Essex's online chef! Each pack includes...

- Online timetable of activities; including physical activities, wellbeing activities and cooking sessions
- Essential food items and recipe cards to create family meals (including fruit, vegetables, bread, tinned goods, squash, milk and more)
- Activity sheets for all ages which you can do at home with no need for too much equipment
- Family Wellbeing Pack which covers a range of topics to support you and your family's health and wellbeing.

Final pack requests must be received by 10 am on Friday, 5th February and can be collected from sites in Epping, Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Debden and Chigwell during the half term week, or they can be delivered to the homes of those who are shielding/isolating or otherwise unable to collect.



Families can request their box at www.rbf.org.uk/holidayclub

Free school meals

The government will also continue to provide support for pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals through the national voucher scheme or lunch parcels to those learning at home during term time next half-term. Support will also be available during the half-term holiday for vulnerable families through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme.



If you child is eligible for FSM, please contact the school office to arrange for the vouchers.

School Menu

Our kitchen staff has updated the weekly menu for those on site. The 3-weekly menu is published on the school's website. We are continuing to offer balanced hot meals daily for those on site.

Dr Walker's CE Primary School – Term 2020

Menu Three served on weeks commencing: 11/1/21, 1/2/21

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<i>Reception Class (Caterpillars) have the daily option to choose a hot meal or the packed lunch for the day (see below)</i>					
Choose your main	Pepperoni Pizza	Homemade Crunchy Coated Chicken Fillet With choice of sauce	Pasta Bolognaise	Chicken Pie Gravy	Fish Fillet
Vegetarian Option	Cheese & Tomato Pizza	Quorn Dippers	Pasta Bolognaise Quorn Mince	Vegetarian Sausage Twist Gravy	Southern Crumbed Quorn Burger
On the Side	Sweetcorn Salad	Savory Rice Broccoli	Sweetcorn Garlic Bread	Mashed Potato Cabbage Carrots	Chips Peas Baked Beans
Lighter Bite	Jacket Potato Choice of fillings Salad Wrap choice of fillings	Tuna & Sweetcorn Or Ham Panini Salad	Jacket Potato Bolognese or Cheese Salad Wrap choice of fillings	Ham or Cheese Panini Salad	Jacket Potato Choice of fillings Wrap Choice of fillings Salad
Pack Lunch in classrooms	Wrap choice of fillings	Tuna & Sweetcorn Or Ham Panini Salad	Wrap choice of fillings	Ham or Cheese Panini Salad	Wrap choice of fillings
For Dessert	Toffee Crispy Fresh Fruit	Chocolate Sponge with Chocolate Custard (no custard for P/L) Fresh Fruit	Fresh Fruit Platter	Jelly with Ice cream Fresh Fruit	Yoghurt Fresh Fruit

Also available daily: Bread, Salad, Fresh fruit, Yoghurt. Fresh milk or water.

School meals/menus 2020/winter

Children's Mental Health Week

Children's Mental Health Week is taking place on 1-7 February 2021. This year's theme is **Express Yourself**.

The website below has a range of resources which could be used or remote learning activities.

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/>





Parent survey

Many thanks for the responses we have had so far. Please be reminded that the survey will close next **Friday, 5th February at 15:30**. Also, please only submit one survey per family.

<https://forms.gle/Sm3GKTQHxRwfqa5Z7>

Volunteers

I am seeking to gauge if there might be anyone willing to volunteer over a weekend (or perhaps half-term) to help with painting the walls of our school's interior. (Paint will be provided!).



Tea and biscuits will be made available to those who are interested in sparing a couple of hours to help us. Please inform the school office if you are interested to help.



Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

I have been wondering whether we can start up the **Parent Teachers Association** again?... But we need your help!

The PTA is intended to be a collaborative approach between parents and teachers, providing the opportunity to share ideas and work together as a community school to benefit both the school and pupils. The National PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTA activities can vary from school to school. The main aim is to be involved in fundraising and social events for pupils, parents and teacher – **OUR COMMUNITY!** The goal is to provide extra resources and, in some cases, making it possible for activities such as school trips to happen.

Research has shown that parental involvement has a very significant impact on a child's achievement and attainment at school.

PTA Values are inclusive of:

Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward the achievement of our association's strategic initiatives.

(Sources: National PTA and Parent Run)

If you are interested in joining the PTA, please contact the school office.

Best wishes,

Dr L Lawson
Headteacher