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Dear Parents and Carers,

I sincerely hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well. These are incredibly difficult times for us all. As a school, we will always do everything that we can to support our community; please ask if you need support or advice and we will do our best to help. My personal plea to everyone is to please follow the guidelines and stay at home. Not only will this keep you and your family safe, but indirectly help keep my staff team safer, so that your children are able to return to school as soon as possible.

Remote Learning

I was humbled by the speed and dedication that my staff team showed in transferring from being open as usual, to partially closed within 24 hours. Our remote learning platform is now fully operational, and I am pleased to see so many parents engaging with our learning tasks each day. We do not underestimate how hard it is to support your child, whilst working from home. Please do get in touch if we can be of any help. Every day teachers upload new maths, English, and topic work for your child, differentiated for their ability. Teachers aim to mark all completed work, submitted by 3.00pm, by the end of the working day. Our remote learning strategy was shared with all parents in early November and is available to read on the school website.

Google Meets

It was a real pleasure to join the Year 1 and Year R live **meets** on Friday. They were not without technical hitches, but everyone persevered! We understand how important it is for everyone to keep in contact with the school, and we hope this platform, for our very young children, will keep us all connected. We plan to hold these meets weekly and encourage you to join if you are able. I look forward to 'meeting' our Year 2 children today.

Free School Meals

As I write this letter to you all, I still await updated government guidance on how schools should support families eligible for Free School Meals during this national lockdown. As soon as I receive updated guidance, I will be in touch with those eligible families. In the meantime, if any families are in urgent need of food, please get in touch with me and we will support wherever we can. Please be assured this will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Reading Books

I am aware that some parents would like to come to school to collect and swap reading books for their children. You will not find a greater advocate of children having real books than me. However, at this time, the message is very clear from government: we must all *stay at home*. I do not believe we can justify visiting the school to swap books, as an essential journey, nor is it safe for those staff and children who are in school. I appreciate children do not engage with electronic books in the same way as a real book but Reading Eggs and websites such as Oxford Owl are good substitutes in these unprecedented times. Reading much loved stories with your child, that you

already have at home will also continue to help them progress in this important skill. I am currently investigating ways that we may be able to get reading books to the children and would ask for you to please bear with me on this.

Mobile Data Support

The government have made schools aware of a temporary scheme to increase mobile data for those most disadvantaged families who are unable to access remote learning on anything other than a mobile telephone. Further details can be found here: [Increasing data allowances on mobile devices to support disadvantaged children - Get help with technology - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/education/get-help-with-technology)

If you feel you fit into this category, please get in touch with us and we will apply on your behalf.

EYFS and Key Stage One children do not qualify for the government laptop loan scheme, but we are actively pursuing alternative sources/donations of devices. If you only have access to a mobile telephone for your child to access remote learning, please get in touch with us so we have a better understanding of the level of need within our community. If your employer may be in a position to donate laptops or you know someone who could, please do get in touch.

COVID-19

For families of children attending school currently, I ask that you continue to be extremely vigilant for COVID-19 symptoms and not send your child in if *anyone* in your household has symptoms. Please keep us informed, either by calling the school telephone number above, or emailing info@bagshot.surrey.sch.uk. Please do not make contact via the class email accounts because they are not checked as regularly as the office email account, and teachers are occupied teaching.

Kindness

I wanted to end this letter on a happy note and say thank you for the thoughtfulness many of you have shown towards the school and staff through; the kind words of encouragement on the gate, via email, or during a 'Google Meet,' I am also very grateful for the generous donations of milk and fruit for the children in school, when deliveries were cancelled. Times are hard right now but, I firmly believe, it is with kindness and thought for each other, we will get through this.

Stay safe, stay well and please *stay at home*.

Yours sincerely

Miss K Aldred