
22nd April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Daily life has changed dramatically for you and your child/children in recent weeks. The day-to-day school routine has been especially affected. I want to thank you for your continued support in keeping yourself and your child/children safe at all times, and to write to you at what we know is a sensitive and challenging time for both you and your family.

It continues to be very important that we all follow the government guidance to minimise the spread of Covid-19, which means staying at home unless it is essential to leave, either to go to work or for weekly shopping. This will save lives.

We are immensely proud of our schools in West Sussex, and the ways in which our Headteachers, Governors, teaching and support staff work tirelessly to continue to provide childcare provision for vulnerable children, those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and for children of key workers, so that they can continue to provide the much needed public services we require at this time. We are also very proud of the ways in which our schools are working creatively to provide you and your child/children with support to help them continue learning safely at home, whilst taking into account the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of your child at all times. We are truly grateful for their continued dedication and commitment, and for the care that they provide to your child/children.

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued principles and guidance to parents and carers this weekend about learning at home, with the launch of national online learning providers such as the BBC (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>) and Oak National Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy>). Whilst our own schools in West Sussex already have processes and resources in place to support their pupils' learning whilst not in school, it is important to remember that it is not possible to replicate for any child a 'school experience' at home. We know it is a big ask of all parents throughout the country to take an active role in supporting the education of their child at home, so our schools are providing all the resources they can to support parents to do this. The supplementary resources provided by the DfE will also help you to support your child's learning at home.

Learning at home will of course be different for every child and most importantly we want you to know that this is perfectly fine. Learning can take place in many places and in many ways. It can happen online or offline, inside or outside, with books, pictures, things you will find at home, through schoolwork, exploration, and through questions that children ask. With that in mind, I have attached some guidance for you as parents/carers and a list of websites you may find helpful. Other sources of help and advice can also be found listed below:

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

Childline

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

NHS Everymind matters

https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIj-fuqbD36AIVSYBQBh1xygXKEAAYASAAEgK88PD_BwE

WSCC local offer

https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/608-resources-and-advice-for-supporting-home-learning

BBC Bitesize Keeping Well Tips & Advice

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdf72sg>

We know that this is an unsettling period for you and your child, especially those who were expecting to take examinations, leave school, or move to new schools later this year. We also know that finding the balance between helping your children learn and everything else that you may be juggling at this time is a difficult ask. Please be assured that our schools will continue to do everything they can to support your child/children during this difficult time.

I would ask that you continue to support your school and teachers as we are all committed to achieving the best we can for your child/children at this time. I wish you and your family well and hope that you stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wagstaff

Director of Education & Skills