

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well during this difficult time. Staff at Kates Hill are thinking about you - our lovely children and families - and missing you all very much.

Here at school we have a skeleton staff in operation to offer care for critical worker parents who have no other way of looking after their children while they are out at work. I would like to take this opportunity to personally, and on behalf of all our staff, thank all parents who are working for our frontline, NHS and emergency services – you are doing an amazing job! I am sure you will agree that it was very moving at 8pm last Thursday to join neighbours and our whole country in clapping outside to show appreciation for critical workers.

In school we have a small number of children every day, cared for by a team of staff who work on a rota, unless they are ill and/or self-isolating. This is a child-care provision, so no lessons are taking place. It certainly feels eerie without the normal routine, laughter and chatter of classes of children, and the face to face contact that we usually have with our families. Like you, I can't wait for everything to get back to normal.

Thank you for supporting your children with activities at home. We have tried our best to put a selection of useful ideas and links on our website to help you, we will provide more after the Easter break. As the weeks go on, we will be looking at ways to support you further and add to the ideas where we can. On our website and filtering through Parent Hub, teachers have now published letters to their classes – please take a look and share with your child. We have now also created email addresses for each year group – please see class teachers' letters for more details. Children can use the email address to send messages, drawings, news etc to their class teacher, if they wish. Teachers would love to hear from pupils and will be able to respond during school hours to questions or queries, and share their own news.

I know many of you are having to work from home while looking after your children – this is not an easy task! We all appreciate that it is really hard keeping youngsters indoors for long periods. It can be even harder to get children to focus on learning activities. If you have work to do, worries about elderly parents and stressful supermarket visits to plan, it can be especially hard. All of this is combined with having to deal with the emotions and concerns we all have in this awful situation. Please don't put undue pressure on yourself or your children, and don't feel guilty if all that you do together some days is sing, dance, cook, make things or play. These are not 'normal' times, so we do not expect children to be following a normal school timetable; it is impossible to replicate school at home. If you can encourage your child to read and complete a couple of hours of work each day, that would be great, but the most important thing at the moment is that children are safe and supported.

Over the Easter break school will be closed so communication from teachers may cease until we reopen. Use this as a break for yourself to change your routine and allow all to destress, where that is possible.

Please keep safe yourself over these next few weeks and encourage everyone in your family to follow the current Government guidance to: stay at home; only go outside for food, health reasons or work (where this absolutely cannot be done at home); stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people; wash your hands as soon as you get home.

My best wishes and love to you all

Kathryn Harvey

Headteacher