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Letter to Waltham Forest Parents and Carers re: Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to thank you all for your understanding, help and assistance as part of the national response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Many of you will be experiencing a very different week under the new 'lockdown' arrangements. Whilst it is clear that this is helping to slow the spread of the virus, I understand that this will provide many of you with significant challenges during this period. It is also clear that parents and carers are doing a fantastic job in supporting children and young people across the Borough. It really is amazing to hear about all the different things that you are doing to support education and learning.

We now know that the lockdown will continue for a while yet and there is a lot of speculation about when / if / how schools will re-open. Currently there is no confirmed proposal. We are in weekly contact with the Department for Education, and as soon as we receive any guidance, we will be working with schools about how we manage this process in Waltham Forest. The priority, when this happens, will be to ensure that it is safe for all children, staff and parents.

For schools to re-open, we will need clear guidance to ensure the continued safety, as well as education, within our schools and settings.

Some parents have asked us about the expectations of them in relation to providing education whilst we are in lockdown. We know that normal education provision has been suspended for all children, regardless of whether they are attending school or not. The resources being provided by schools and other agencies are to support you through these challenging times but we recognise that you are not teachers. Any level of support that you can provide for your children is to be welcomed. Schools will work with your children,

whenever they re-open, to support all children to get back to 'normal service', and to close any gaps that have appeared in your children's learning.

We are also working with schools to ensure that we are keeping in touch with children during this period. Schools, along with the local authority staff, continue to contact specific families to continue to offer support where needed. For some particularly vulnerable children we think they will be better off in school during these challenging times and we will therefore be writing directly to specific families encouraging them to send children to school.

The resources to help parents and families through this period have been created and shared through a number of on-line providers.

Details of some of these are as follows:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=cab989cd-0d5a-4ac7-91456445159c785f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuknotifications&utm_content=immediate

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-educationresources>

The BBC have launched bitesize daily lessons, details of which can be found here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>.

There are staff available online and by phone in your children's school or setting if you have worries and we would encourage you to use the contact if you would find it helpful.

With many thanks for all your support and understanding.

Yours sincerely



David Kilgallon

Director of Learning & Systems Leadership