
Old Church C.E. (C) Primary School
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Headteacher: Ms D Clacy



April 15th 2020

Dear Parents

Daily Update

I hope that you had a good Easter break. It has certainly been unusual this year. My hairdresser text me to say that she is usually envious of my Easter holidays but now she is envious of me being in work over Easter.

I have tried to include a lot of support information in this letter. I will resend the email list of places to go for help from yesterday as I am not sure that it sent.

Free School Meals (My least favourite subject).

I expect you have seen on the BBC news and heard on local radio about the problems schools are having accessing Free School Meal vouchers. This included a Walsall Headteacher on local radio. The whole process is a nightmare and we are spending hours on this problem.

We have had confirmation that voucher codes have been authorised and been sent to your email address. The system crashed again yesterday. I can assure you that many parents received an email from Edenred yesterday. It is then up to the parents to process their vouchers. I will attach the instructions on what you have to do to access the vouchers.

Mrs Spittle has been in work since 6:30 am this morning requesting the vouchers for this week. We again have had confirmations that these have been accepted. So it is just a waiting game I am afraid.

If you genuinely have no food for your children please contact school and we will direct you to food banks.

If you have had no email by Friday please telephone the school office 0121 5686329.

School Places

Reception school places should be announced on April 16th as planned by the Government. We should get the list soon afterwards. My Reception staff will then start to make a plan on how to contact you. We usually do home visits but this will not be possible this year. It is a unique situation but my staff will do their utmost to prepare your child for their next school year. We have plenty of time so please be patient.

School Appeals

If you have lodged an appeal against a High School placement these will still go ahead. However, the rules have been relaxed and a committee will no longer sit to hear the appeal. Instead this will be done by telephone. Deadlines have also been relaxed. If you are in this situation please contact the local authority to find out how they will proceed with your appeal. If you are having problems please call the office and we will try and help.

Adoption Support

The Government have announced £8,000,000 to support families who have adopted children through the Covid-19 process. This is to support children and carers/ parents who are isolating. My suggestion is to contact your adoption social worker if you feel that you need support through this crisis.

Online Safety

THINKUKNOW have released new online safety at home activity packs to help parents and carers during COVID-19. These are simple 15 minute activities you can do with your child to support their online safety at home.

View further information and advice on keeping your child safe online during the COVID-19 pandemic at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

Help lines

Below are some other resources to support children and parents.

YoungMinds:

This is to support children and young people and their parents/carers with their mental health and wellbeing. It also gives specific advice on managing self-isolation and anxiety about coronavirus. <https://youngminds.org.uk>

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000 If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact NSPCC professional counsellors for help, advice and support.

Childline 0800 1111: Offers free, confidential advice and support for any child 18 years or under, whatever the worry.

ICON:. Advice and support for parents coping with a crying baby <http://iconcope.org/>

Domestic Abuse:

The government's advice on self-isolation during COVID-19 could mean that for many victims of domestic abuse, staying at home may not be the safest option. We know that any external factors that add stress and financial strain can negatively impact on victims and create circumstances where their safety is further compromised. The figures show Domestic Abuse is up 120%.

For domestic abuse support in Walsall call Black Country Women's Aid on 01922 649569 or www.blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk

They also offer advice to men so please don't be put off by the title.

In serious cases call 999 then press 55

Keeping in Touch

We have started the process of calling all of our families just to touch base with you. Sometimes it helps the children just to hear a voice from school. So if you get a call from school please don't worry we just want to make sure that you are all OK.

Angie and I are also in the office every day from 8-4 pm and often longer. If you need advice, help or just want to talk to an adult please feel free to call us.

Please take care and we will all get through this together.

Kind Regards
Davina Clacy