



St Leonard's C.E. Primary School

"Nurturing Faith and Inspiring Success"

Southwark Diocesan
Board of Education
Multi-Academy Trust



Mitcham Lane, Streatham, SW16 6NP
Telephone: 020 8769 2712 Fax: 020 8664 6025
www.st-leonards.lambeth.sch.uk
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Headteacher: Mr Simon Jackson BAQTS (Hons) NPQH
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Laura Akhtar BA(Hons) PGCE

26th March 2020

School Update

Dear Parent / Carer,

I sincerely hope that you are all safe and well within your homes in these difficult times. I'm missing seeing you all at Gate 1 each day. In writing this letter, let me acknowledge from the outset that it is going to be very difficult for the school to meet everybody's expectations over the weeks and months ahead. I am already aware of frustration being expressed from some quarters and, whilst I sincerely empathise, the reality is that we are not able to rely on many of the normal systems that we use within the school.

For example, whilst it is true that there are some fantastic technological systems out there, there is not the national infrastructure for all schools to be using them at the same time – so networks are running slowly or indeed crashing entirely. If this is your experience when we attempt to post daily tasks as a whole school from April 20th, then I apologise in advance but ask that you accept that there are many aspects which are outside of the school's control.

For those parents wondering why they've received logins for some of their children but not yet others, it's simply a case that these take time to get created. We are working really hard to ensure that all of this is securely available by April 20th.

There is one difficult message that I feel I must share with you: *I have always made it clear to staff that there is a clear hierarchy of priority within a school. Children first always, staff second and other community members third.*

Your children are **always** our top priority when the school is open. My absolute priority now is to ensure the safety of my staff team as best as I can. I want to see every one of them back, fit and well after this situation is over so that your children can quickly receive the education they deserve at the earliest opportunity. You are naturally the ones directly looking out for your children at this time. I am the one who must look out for the needs of the staff.

As such, the following groups of staff are exempt from any work on site with children, including those of key workers:

- Those who've received direct instruction from the NHS to remain at home
- Those with conditions where they are advised to remain at home
- Those with Primary aged or pre-school aged children
- Those living with people classed as vulnerable to the virus
- Those who wish not to be considered for other reasons



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Today I have contacted all those who applied before the deadline for key worker childcare places to explain that I only have the capacity to offer care for those children with parents employed by the NHS or the Metropolitan Police. This care will also be offered during the first week of the designated Easter holiday at least and I sincerely thank those staff prepared to attend school for these sessions. I will signpost all other applications to Lambeth once I receive details of their hub schools. I know that this may not be popular amongst those key workers who want their child to be provided for here but I must prioritise the needs and safety of the staff.

To those declaring that the government has said that the school has a duty of care for all children of key workers – the guidance also clearly states that this may not be possible in all schools. This is the case for St Leonard's. Also, the government's clear message is that all children are safest remaining within their home wherever possible. The school based option should be the final option not the first choice.

As promised, there is a list of useful websites now available via a link on the homepage of the school's website: www.st-leonards.lambeth.sch.uk You may receive other communications for your child's particular class also but daily challenges are not due to be set until April 20th.

I recognise that the current situation presents different challenges for different families. Some families will be hoping for lots of activities being set for their child or children, whilst others will be dreading the prospect of trying to work with their child at home. Please be reassured. We are only trying to offer learning opportunities. Your child's engagement will not be monitored. We're communicating with you on the understanding that we're all simply trying our best in very difficult circumstances. Please do not feel that you have to do every challenge every day.

I will write to you again before the Easter weekend. Please also follow us on Twitter @StLeonardsCEP for updates and check your parentmail regularly.

Wishing everyone well.

Kind regards,

Mr Simon Jackson

Head Teacher



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