

Silchester Road  
Reading  
Berks  
RG30 3EJ  
0118 9375533  
[southcoteprimary.co.uk](http://southcoteprimary.co.uk)

Dorothy Street  
Reading  
Berks  
RG1 2NL  
0118 9375490  
[katesgroveprimaryschool.co.uk](http://katesgroveprimaryschool.co.uk)

27 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are now in week 4 of lockdown and I just wanted to give you all an update on where we are.

### **School re-opening**

As you may be aware, Boris Johnson has stated in parliament today that schools may start to re-open from the week beginning March 8<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately he did not provide any further detail and schools have not been given any extra information. Currently we do not know if this will be a partial wider opening or full opening for all pupils. Once we are clear what the government intends us to do, we will write again.

### **Testing**

We are very pleased to be able to offer all staff in school the use of lateral flow testing. This is optional for all staff and I am delighted to say take up has been incredibly high. Staff are now taking lateral flow tests twice a week. At present we don't know if the government intends to offer any form of testing to pupils as currently this is only taking place in secondary schools.

### **Vaccinations for staff**

Currently there are no plans to vaccinate staff ahead of wider opening and we will keep parents up to date with any further developments.

### **Free school meals**

Currently pupils entitled to free school meals are receiving vouchers from the government. If you have not received your voucher from school or having trouble accessing them, please contact admin. The government does not intend to continue the vouchers over February half term but we are delighted to let you know that Reading Borough Council are looking at how to deliver a scheme over the half term holidays and we will keep you up to date with any further developments.

### **Remote Learning**

Thank you for all the wonderful messages complimenting the schools on the Remote Learning package we have developed. We have had a handful of parents repeatedly request live learning and as I have explained, repeatedly, this has many drawbacks and we are not going to be able to offer this. However we will be trialling a range of live learning techniques in different year groups. Currently we are offering some 1:1 sessions for targeted children. Year groups will be trialling small group meeting sessions to check on learning, help with learning that children are finding tricky and motivational/engagement sessions for those who find the situation difficult. Please bear in mind different year groups are trialling different methods depending on the staff capacity.

We are currently struggling with several staff having tested positive and others having to isolate at home so have had to move our staffing structure around. Can I assure parents if a member of staff is in a bubble at any point in the week, we will not place them in another bubble that same week. As you can appreciate this can be very challenging. Unfortunately we have several members of staff who have been very ill with Covid and ask parents to please be patient if you are not able to talk to your class teacher or a year group teacher. Can I just publicly thank all of the staff across the Federation for going above and

beyond to ensure every child receives high quality education. Can I also ask that if parents have a specific issue with not having live learning that they email school rather than addressing it repeatedly with the class teacher. Our Remote Learning policy remains as it is.

Please use the telephone calls with staff as they are intended, which is to support your child's learning through discussion of any tasks they are finding tricky or to review the learning taking place. We are obviously more than happy to discuss any wellbeing issues.

#### **Donations to our Covid support fund**

Can I say a massive thank you to all parents who have supported the Federation either with food and essential items or monetary donations. Please keep these coming whenever you can as this is a life line for many families in our community.

Donations for either school can be made via your ParentPay account:

- Katesgrove: Covid19 Fundraising
- Southcote: Covid19 Parent Donation Fund

Any parents in need of help and support, please contact Laura Elliott: [lelliott@thekennetfederation.co.uk](mailto:lelliott@thekennetfederation.co.uk)

#### **Laptops**

We have had an unprecedented amount of requests at both schools for laptops and could not in any way meet the demand we had. Over 100 devices were requested at each school. In total, Southcote received 31 devices and Katesgrove 34. All have been allocated to families. If you have not received a laptop then we will be adding you to our list for the next allocation we will receive from the DFE. We expect these at the end of February. If any parent is able to donate any laptops or knows of a company who is able to support us, please contact the admin office and we will be in touch.

#### **SIM Cards**

We still have some free Vodafone 30GB data only sim cards available if these would support you with getting online. Please email the school office if you require one of these.

#### **Keyworker and vulnerable pupils**

As I stated previously, we have one of the highest numbers of pupils on site, particularly at Southcote when compared to other schools. We now have a waiting list in both schools for keyworker status and need to remind parents that being a keyworker does not guarantee a place as we have a limited number of spaces available.

As a Federation we are committed to offering the highest quality of education that we can during these trying times and we cannot wait for the day all our pupils are back together again. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any support. We are here for you.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Telling  
Executive Headteacher  
The Kennet Federation