

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)

08 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Hopefully these first few days of lockdown have now started to settle into another new routine for everybody and you are getting on ok. Thank you all for the support you have shown to both schools in these very difficult times. We have been overwhelmed by your positive messages and lovely comments during our phone calls. All remote working children should have received a phone call from one of their year group teachers over the last two days to establish the amount of contact parents would like during this lockdown period.

As a reminder, the current Government guidance is that schools are closed to children other than Critical Worker and Vulnerable Pupils until February Half Term. This means that our Governing Body do not need to review this as originally planned and we will await the next update from the Government. Currently we have 138 children attending Southcote daily and 79 children attending Katesgrove.

### **Remote Learning**

During our time of remote learning, we will be improving our offer. Currently we have both online and paper packs for learning as well as using a range of ICT programmes including Purple Mash, My Maths and Education City. To add to this we have also introduced targeted phonics videos, story time with a year group adult and as the weeks go by, we will also be adding teaching videos of lesson inputs to the suite of materials. We have stayed away from live online learning as parents have got to be in the room with the children and it means parents would be unable to flex their day if they are having to work from home. We have chosen to use videos for the additional benefit of being able to rewind and watch again if a child or parent is struggling with a concept.

### **Feedback**

We are also improving our offer of feedback and are currently procuring a piece of software, which will allow parents to upload work and enable teachers and support assistants to provide feedback. We will send more details next week about this as we are currently trialling the materials.

### **Thank you to staff**

Can I say a massive thank you to the staff this week who have all been in school and have worked tirelessly to ensure that both face to face and remote working started immediately. In both schools all staff have gone above and beyond to ensure we could get going straight away.

### **Learning packs**

Learning packs will be available from 9am each Friday in readiness for the next week of remote learning. This will be a contact free collection. Please only take the pack for your child's actual year group. Special Educational Needs children will receive individual packs directly from our SEND team. Learning packs will be available for collection every day between 9.30am-2.30pm. We will also be putting out reading books for collection at the same time. Please ensure you return reading books to the returns box regularly as we only have a finite supply and will need to quarantine them before allowing them to be re-used.

### **Data only sim cards**

For any parents who are using mobile phones, we have been given some free Vodafone 30GB data only sim cards. We have 35 of these for each school, which means parents could use this free data to support

their family with remote learning or keeping in touch with friends and family during the lockdown. Please email the school office if you require one of these.

#### **Using games consoles for remote learning**

Did you know it is possible to access Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams through games consoles? This [online guide](#) explains how to access remote learning via Playstation 4 and Xbox 1. The games consoles can also be used to access the internet.

#### **Increasing data allowance on mobile devices**

The government has introduced a scheme which temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks so children and young people can access remote education during lockdown. This link tells you more:

<https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/guide-to-collecting-mobile-information>

We need to request the increased data allowance on your behalf so we have sent out a Microsoft Form to collect the information that we need. Some networks have limited the number of increases available so we will need to submit the requests as soon as possible.

#### **Laptops for school children**

Many of you may already have seen that the government have provided laptops for children. We have tried to apply for these but currently the government are only giving these laptops to Secondary aged pupils. In the hope that laptops will be made available to us at some point, we will be sending out a Microsoft Form to see how many children may need one.

#### **Food and support**

Please remember we continue to support all families with the food bank and support bank. We are continuing to deliver to parents who need both food and toiletries. Food donations can be left in the non-contact collection bin outside both schools offices and our Parentpay donation account remains open if anyone would like to donate to our hardship fund. Thank you to anyone that can contribute to these. If any parents are struggling financially to pay bills, please contact school and we will see how we can support. We are also able to deliver food, essential items and learning packs to any families that are having to self-isolate. We are also continuing to support all our families who find themselves in difficulty. Please contact us if you need a food parcel or essential items. To access any of this support please contact Laura Elliott: [l Elliott@thekennetfederation.co.uk](mailto:l Elliott@thekennetfederation.co.uk).

#### **Thank You**

Lastly can I just say a massive thank you to all of our critical workers, we are so proud to support you to do the jobs you do. Can we say an even bigger thank you to our NHS staff who are simply super heroes. My final thank you is to all of our parents who are having to juggle working at home and home schooling - we know you have the toughest job of all and support you 100% in managing/juggling this however we can. At the moment we all have to get through this the best we can. There is no right way, we just have to get through it. Please know we are here to support every one of you and do not judge your way of doing this. Please let us know if you need anything. We are here for you and your children, and we are proud to serve our community.

Yours sincerely



Executive Headteacher  
The Kennet Federation