

# PARKSIDE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Garlinge and Parkside Primary Schools and Nurseries Federation

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Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sure that many of you will have seen the recent news and have picked up on the Prime Minister's statement regarding school closures, but if you haven't it seems an appropriate time to update you and also to recap the ways in which we can continue to support with Home Learning.

We are certainly of the opinion that in an ideal world pupils would be safe, in school and learning as usual with their friends, however, we do feel that our school staff have made a fantastic effort to respond at short notice and implement a comprehensive home learning system and at least we now have some certainty about how the coming weeks are likely to unfold. The key announcements from this week in parliament are as follows:

- The **earliest** schools might 'begin to re-open' will be Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, which is the start of the third school week after the half-term holiday;
- There will be a plan/review set out on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February (the first day after the half-term holiday), with further updates;
- When the decision to return has been made, schools will get at least two weeks notice of this.

Sadly, this means that we have at least four more school weeks of home-learning under the current arrangements. I know that this will be bitterly disappointing for many parents and children, but I hope that it provides some hope that there might be an end in sight, at least in terms of getting our children back into school.

We also received a clarification from the Department for Education (DfE) this week that schools would not be asked to open over half-term for children of critical workers as was the case in the first lock-down. Whilst various rota options were used during previous lockdowns which allowed schools to provide cover during holidays, all school staff have been working extremely hard on our home learning offers so the half-term holiday will continue as normal.

I would like to thank the huge majority of you who are working so well with us and supporting your children in so many aspects of their home learning. It has been lovely to see the emails, pictures and work submitted that children have been busy doing and we hope that it is providing them with some sort of normality and routine. There are a small number of pupils who have been more reluctant to engage and we would very much like to know if there is anything further that we can do to support. It is still the school's responsibility to provide pupils with home education and we must also monitor who is engaging with this and the impact it is having. This support may take the shape of some extra technical explanation about the systems we use, some further support with the ways in which we teach or even the provision of laptops or devices. Whilst we cannot guarantee that laptops would be available to everyone, we would urge you to share any concerns and we will do our very best to help. If you do require support, please contact the school office on 01227 464956.

Finally, please can I re-iterate my admiration for all that you are doing during the current difficult times. Please remember that we are here to support and advise wherever possible and that we sincerely hope that



the most recent measures taken by the government, combined with the ongoing vaccination programme, mean that when pupils are able to come back into school, it will be sustained and that they will quickly settle back into their old routines.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Williams".

Mr James Williams  
Executive Headteacher