

Thursday 26th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for working with us over this last week and a half to implement the Government's instruction that we remain at home where at all possible. I appreciate that for many of you it is a challenge to maintain your own work and support your children at home, but it has meant that we have been able to provide childcare for the keyworkers who are working hard to beat the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic. Government guidance states:

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
- any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household. These measures must be followed by everyone. Separate advice is available for individuals or households who are isolating, and for the most vulnerable who need to be shielded.

Where parents do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents' homes.

Sadly, I am aware of several parents who had their hours cut or lost their jobs as a result of the Coronavirus. If this also applies to you, you may now be eligible to receive Pupil Premium funding. Signing up for Pupil Premium means that your child/ren will receive free school meals, even during this period where schools are closed. Please register as soon as possible on the following website:

www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals to check your eligibility please go to
https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ufs/HCWH.eb?ebd=0&ebz=1_1585150218601

To support you during this time, we have put together a list of services that you and your family may require:

Emergency

- Police: 101 or Emergency 999
- NHS Direct: 111
- Child Line: 0800 1111
- Children's Services: 0300 123 4043

Mental Health

- Samaritans: 116 123 - <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- World Health Organisation - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2
- World Health Organisation - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_2
- <http://dsplarea9.org.uk/mental-health-emotional-wellbeing/>

Food Bank

- Watford foodbank: 07925 813027 - <http://www.watfordfoodbank.co.uk/>

Benefits

- Jobcentre Plus: 0800 055 6688
- <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-claim-universal-credit>

Domestic Abuse

- Refuge: 0808 200 0247 – www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Women’s Aid: 0808 800 0028 - <https://bswaid.org/> - text service: 08001 08088000028
- Men’s Advice Line: 0808 801 0327 - www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Debt advice and financial support

- Money Advice Service: 0800 138 7777 - <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>
- Citizens Advice Bureau - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- Watford Salvation Army: 01923 801169 - <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/watford>
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/if-you-cant-pay-your-bills-because-of-coronavirus/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-agrees-measures-with-energy-industry-to-support-vulnerable-people-through-covid-19>
- <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-and-your-energy-supply>

Bereavement

- Cruse Bereavement Care - Hertfordshire Area: 01707 278 389 - <http://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- Hope again – young people living after loss: 0808 808 1677 - <https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/>

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Delivering Special Provision Locally - <http://dsplarea9.org.uk/> - Local partnership focused on meeting the needs of young people with SEND. Many useful links for all children not just those with SEND.
- Integrated Services for Learning: 01992 588574 - 2:00-4:30pm speak directly to an Educational Psychologist to discuss your child’s development, learning or emotional wellbeing.
- Social stories and comic strip cartoons - <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>
- Contact (national charity for families of children with disabilities) - <https://www.contact.org.uk/>

Communication and autism needs

- Communication and autism Specialist Advisory Teachers: 01442 453920 - daily between 10am and 2pm (term time) to provide advice and guidance for parents and carers. They are unable to provide advice in relation to the coronavirus or the duration of school closures.
- Coronavirus Social Stories:
- <https://theautismeducator.ie/2020/03/11/corona-virus-social-story/>
- <https://www.scoec.org/news/featured/Documents/Coronavirus%20Social%20Story%20-%20Cheri%20Palladino.pdf>
- <https://paautism.org/resource/coronavirus-social-story/>

E-Safety

- <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/parent-and-carer-toolkit>
- <https://www.childnet.com/resources/supporting-young-people-online>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/e-safety-for-schools/>
- <https://www.getsafeonline.org/>
- <https://www.esafety-adviser.com/latest-newsletter/>

Asthma

Asthma UK published the following [shielding advice](#) yesterday - "If you are, or your child is, taking:

- Any biologic therapy, also called a mAb (Xolair/omalizumab, Nucala/mepolizumab, Cinquaero/reslizumab, Fasenra/benralizumab)
- Steroid tablets or liquid every day
- Antibiotic tablets or liquid for asthma every week (e.g. azithromycin)
- Tiotropium
- A combination inhaler that also contains a long-acting bronchodilator (e.g. Seretide, Fostair, Symbicort) at a high daily steroid dose (see the list.....in the article)
- An inhaler with a high daily steroid dose (see the list....in the article) AND you are taking Montelukast
- Or, if:
- You have been admitted to hospital for your asthma in the last 12 months
- You have ever been admitted to an intensive care unit for your asthma

Then you should follow the [shielding advice](#) which is set out in very helpful detail, including how to register for extra services from the government."

Support Line

If you are worried about the Mental Health and Wellbeing of you or your family, if you require support and advice about your child's behaviour at home or if you are isolated and need a familiar person to talk to we have provided a dedicated phone number for each school which will be operating Monday to Friday from 9.00am until 5.00pm.

Please send a text with your name and the name of your child/children. Staff will respond to the text by calling you back within 24 hours. Where a text is received on a Friday, expect to be called the following Monday. If it is urgent and you need a quicker response, please type URGENT at the beginning of the text. Thank you to our amazing Pastoral Leads who have set this great service up.

Beechfield - 07535 177903

Cherry Tree – 07535 177 881

Laurance Haines – 07960 014104

We will be updating this list on our websites. If you have any useful sites or advice, please feel free to forward them to me so I can share them - jamesroach@inclusivemat.co.uk

We have heard from parents who are worried that they are not doing a good enough job with home schooling, or that their child isn't getting through all the work that they want them to. My message is simple – don't be so hard on yourself and give yourself a break. Home schooling is hard, hard for parents, hard for children and hard for teachers! I have spoken to lots of our staff who are home schooling and I am just recovering from a morning of doing the same with my own children, so we know how you feel (and I promise you, we are having the same challenges that you are). Use the work set by school as a starting point and then be guided by your child's interests. Cook, clean, garden, sing, dance, hide, talk, read, write, count, draw, paint, play with them but most of all laugh with them, go with it and don't worry! When it is all over, they will be in a good place to come back to school and we can take things from there. Please share your great home learning on twitter, I look forward to seeing the fun you have with your children.

Yours sincerely,



James Roach

Chief Executive Officer

Inclusive Multi Academy Trust