



Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April

Dear parents and carers,

## Summer Term

Welcome back to the Summer term – not a start that anyone could have expected nor one we are likely to experience again in our lifetimes! We hope you had a lovely Easter break despite the current circumstances, and that you and your families are all safe and well. Thank you to those of you who are regularly keeping in touch via Twitter and the school blogs – this is really helping keep morale going and our staff love hearing from you and the children.

We are sure that you are all feeling anxious and concerned about the current situation and with yesterday's government announcement giving no indication of when this situation is likely to change, we know these unsettling times are likely to continue for some time. All we can do is what we can to manage/cope and we again want to reiterate the messages sent to you in a letter from a few weeks ago. We know that the learning experiences for your children right now are far from ideal and we fully recognise that there is only so much that can be achieved by anyone given how much is being balanced by you all. Please try to be kind to yourselves – it is so easy to feel anxious and guilty about “not doing enough”, “not keeping up”, “giving too much screen time” (to name but a few things we know ourselves that we feel) but please don't be hard on yourselves for finding your own survival methods through all of this. We will come out on the other side ready to face new challenges, and want to reassure you that whilst damaging to your children's education now, this will all come good in the future. The best we can hope for is that this becomes a memory for your children that they look back on fondly as being time when the sun was (unbelievably) shining every day, where they had time to play and spend quality time with family and where they discovered new and exciting ways to keep in touch with people important to them, strengthening their bonds to others and improving a future generation's outlook on the world and what really matters.

We wanted to write to you today, at the start of a new term, to share some useful information that we hope helps. Apologies that this is another longer letter but in the interests of keeping in touch without bombarding you too often, we felt it helpful to provide headline information here that you can refer back to in one place, rather than in multiple communications.

## Re. Home Learning Live/Online Lessons

We recognise that organising home learning is very difficult for many of you and want to thank you all for everything that you are doing for your children during this challenging time. We know that it is hard to get your own head around some of the concepts being asked of your children in their work and that this adds to your own stress levels when trying to balance your own work too. With that in mind, and following a couple of requests for more interactive lessons, we wanted to make you aware of a range of resources and online materials that have now been developed and may be of

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# Brookburn Primary School



Brookburn Road  
Chorlton-cum-Hardy  
Manchester, M21 8EH  
T: 0161 881 8880 | F: 0161 861 7960  
Email: [admin@brookburn.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:admin@brookburn.manchester.sch.uk)

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interest to you all. In a similar way to the structure and routine of a morning Joe Wicks 9am PE lesson, these resources not only provide activities for your children to complete, but short demonstrations and explanations via videos that help your children and their understanding. Where they have misconceptions, they can pause, re-watch and then continue with the lesson content. These materials are all very new to us as well as you (with some only going live today), and we will spend the next week with our staff exploring all in more depth, before developing our approach to home learning moving forward.

- **BBC Bitesize**

The BBC have developed a fantastic online resource for free that everyone has access to starting from today. Every day, there is a maths and English lesson for children in all year groups (including those of you with secondary aged children), with videos and short tasks built in across the lesson. There is also a foundation subject lesson each day covering objectives in history, geography, science, RE, music, Art and Design etc which are mapped out through each week. We want to express our gratitude to the BBC for the speed in which they have responded to this crisis and for providing such high quality materials for children of every age – it is very much appreciated and if you do find yourself using these resources and lessons for your children, we think you will be as impressed as we are.

- **English**

At 9.45am every day, Jane Considine presents a live writing lesson “Super Sentence Stacking” for children of all ages to access via Youtube. At 10.30am, she then sets a writing task linked to the stimulus and input provided. If you have just one computer, and three children in different year groups, the approach ensures all can produce some writing for their own developmental level, but also enables your children to chat and talk about their ideas to support each other too.

- **Maths**

We have already started to direct you as parents to the White Rose maths resources that are organised into weekly sequences of lessons for each term. As we move into the new term, all summer term lessons are available and every day, any lesson set has an accompanying video which enables children to watch guidance and practice concepts before having a go themselves. We use many white rose resources in school already but feel that the video guidance helps children make greater sense of concepts, thus removing any pressure on you as parents to scrub up on your own maths skills.

- **Our teacher communications with you**

Our teachers will continue to send personalised learning home each week (directing you exactly to which resources, online tools or specific lessons to use) however it may prove to become the case that teachers feel the level and quality of work set via the materials outlined above does everything that is needed, especially with the explicit teaching lesson linked to each resource, and thus, you may find that these programmes become a regular feature in teacher

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communication with you about home learning. As explained above, we will take time this week to have a play with all new materials (of which more are published on a near daily basis) to ensure that we set tasks that are supportive for all.

Moving forward, our teachers will now be communicating work for the week ahead on the Friday before so that you have time over the weekend to print any resources or get your own heads around the upcoming week before jumping back into things on a Monday. We have had some requests for teachers to send out work on a daily basis, however with staff illness and other circumstances, in addition to staff still working in our childcare provision, we feel this would be overwhelming for them, and for you, and think all work sent in one weekly communication gives the flexibility to many of you to work through tasks set in your own way and at your own pace. We also know some people have asked us to send clearer timetables for each day. We have considered this but feel that to send a tight structure and timetable will be overwhelming for many of you who are trying to balance multiple things. We recognise structure is important but think that it is best left to you to work out how you want your days to work based on individual circumstances, and what you feel you can manageably achieve, without the pressure of school enforced expectations. We hope this makes sense as we want to support without causing unnecessary anxiety or pressure.

## Keeping in Touch

- **Emails**

Many thanks to those of you who have emailed in to the school office with any queries or thoughts you have. We are hosting online staff meetings with our teams this week and will discuss some of the requests you have made before updating you at the end of the week with any additional plans we have. In the meantime, please do feel free to contact us via the [parentinbox@brookburn.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:parentinbox@brookburn.manchester.sch.uk) or [admin@brookburn.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:admin@brookburn.manchester.sch.uk) and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible. We please ask that you **do not** email teaching staff directly and please send any messages for their attention to the provided email addresses so that these can be sent on to staff within their working hours. Thank you for your support on this matter.

- **Zoom**

We know many of you have children at home really missing their friends and teaching staff. We now plan to hold weekly Zoom calls henceforth that you and your child can log into to see your class teacher and friends. This will not be an online lesson, but it will be an opportunity for everyone to have socialisation time and a chance for our teachers to check in with the children, which we know everyone will appreciate. Again, we will send further information about this once the finer detail has been agreed with staff.

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## Thanks

We wanted to thank you, our parent community, for your ongoing support at this time. We know this is not ideal for anyone and the current circumstances we all face requires a great deal of flexibility and patience, which isn't easy, especially when we are all heightened and worried about the situation and how long it is due to last. You are all doing a brilliant job and deserve your own clap for balancing and wearing so many hats through the course of your day.

We also wanted to say thank you to our staff team, who have also been fantastic whilst thrown into this unfamiliar territory. They are working very hard staffing our childcare provision and have adapted to a new way of working which has not been easy. Our staff are all in this situation with you – and many of them also have families at home to balance with their own work too, in addition to worries about the health and well-being of themselves and of family and loved ones, so they fully understand how many of you feel and are doing everything they can to provide the best support available to you in these times. They have been a superb team and we wanted to share this recognition and thanks amongst our whole community.

## Wellbeing and supporting your children – IMPORTANT ATTACHMENT

Attached with this letter is an additional document, kindly provided by a school service called The Key. Recognising that children may well be struggling to understand what is happening and why at the moment, and finding it upsetting not seeing friends, being in school or simply having normality around them, the document provides some very useful ideas and suggestions about things you may well be seeing, and strategies you can use to help them. There are a list of phone numbers and services provided who can offer further guidance and support should you find that your child is struggling to a point where you need more help. Of course, we are also here to be of help and assistance, so please don't hesitate to contact us at school if there is anything that we can do to help – even if it is as simple as a phone call home from their class teacher or someone they feel close to.

We hope you are all well and continue to take care and keep safe in these times. We are very much looking forward to seeing you all when this is over.

In the meantime, let's crack on with the summer term and continue to enjoy the sunshine.

Sent with very best wishes,

The Senior Leadership Team

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