

Watergate School
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Dear Parents and Families,

Half Term Update

These last few weeks have certainly been busy, both for us in school, and particularly for those of you who are once again home educating your children. We really do understand what a huge task home teaching is for our families. We thank and applaud you for all that you are doing to keep your children engaged in their learning.

Home Learning: I hope that you have been as pleased, impressed and entertained as I have with the fabulous videos, stories, songs and other on-line learning activities our amazingly creative staff have been putting onto our website. They have also been very busy creating home learning packs and developing exciting weekly challenges as well as doing their usual 'day job' in school.

We have recently received our first delivery of laptops and tablets from the Department for Education and these are being set-up and sent home to those families whose children do not have access to devices. There are more to be delivered after half term.

Children in School: At the moment I am proud to say that nearly 55% of our pupils are having some time in school during each week. This number is a lot higher than the national average for special schools, which I believe is around 30%. Some of you are choosing to keep your children at home as you feel it is the safest place for them and for your families. For others the challenges of lockdown are having a big impact and we are receiving an increasing number of requests for children to come to school. In order to reduce the risks of infection we have to limit the number of staff and pupils in each class each day, which is why, for many of you, your children only have part-time places at the moment. Please trust that we are trying very hard to respond to your requests and we await the next set of guidance from the Government so we can draw up plans for the coming weeks.

On-line Well-Being Workshop for families – there will be two opportunities to join this workshop which will be facilitated by Natasha Russell our Educational Psychologist and Rani Singh our Family Support Worker. It will be an opportunity to share your thoughts and challenges with others in a similar situation and to learn new ways of managing your own well-being. The first workshop is on 25th February at 1.30 and it will be repeated on 1st March @ 11.00. Please contact our Family Worker, Rani, if you would like to join one of the workshops r.singh@watergate.lewisham.sch.uk



Staff Testing: Our staff on the main school site have access to Lateral Flow Tests twice a week, these tests enable us to identify people who have Covid-19 but who are not showing any symptoms. Staff at Ladywell are about to begin using home tests twice a week. These tests are a part of what we are doing to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Vaccinations: We have been very fortunate to have been offered the opportunity for vaccinations for our staff and many have taken up the offer. This gives individuals protections, but does not yet mean that we are able to change our Risk Assessment or the way in which we are working.

FSM Vouchers - Families will receive a £15 Sainsbury voucher next week to cover half term period. The Edenred national voucher scheme will then resume after half term. Please contact Carly Kennedy on c.kennedy@watergate.lewisham.sch.uk if you have any queries.

Please join me in thanking our wonderful staff team who are doing such a fantastic job in such difficult circumstances. Many of them are learning a lot of new skills at the moment! I would also like to thank the school's senior leadership team who are: working flat out on the rotas so we can have as many children in school as possible; ensuring that remote learning is happening that Annual Reviews continue and that staff who are not in school have excellent training opportunities.

A letter has gone home today about what to do if your child develops Covid-19 symptoms during the half term holiday.

I wish you a happy and safe half term break.

Fiona

