



Garden Suburb Junior School

Childs Way • London • NW11 6XU



Tel: 020 8455 3269 • E-mail : office@gsjs.barnetmail.net • Website : www.gardensuburbjunior.co.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs Eileen Bhavsar BA (Hons) MSc • Deputy Head Teacher: Mrs Lisa Berger BEd (Hons)
Administrator / School Business Manager: Ms Julia Chalfen

27th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that you are well and that you are managing with the challenges that 'lockdown' has forced upon us all. I can't believe that it is only a week since the school closed due to COVID-19. At school, so much has been happening in order to establish new ways of working. I am sure that at home you are also having to make adjustments, in order to support your children and other family members.

At the same time many of you are having to 'work at home' which is challenging and sometimes impossible. I do hope that your own employers are showing understanding about the difficulties this has created for you. I hope that you are all being kind to each other and especially to yourselves. Please do not feel pressured to do everything we set!

Many of us are trying to meet the expectations of our jobs as well as care for children and elderly relatives. We all have to prioritise the many demands on our time and attention. Watching the news is also causing stress and worry. Maintaining good mental health, for you and your family, should be your first priority.

Spending more time at home as a family, we know has brought its challenges. Supporting your children with increased learning activities is also an adjustment that many of you may be finding difficult. Try and build some structure into your day as our timetable suggested. Thank you for the positive messages of support regarding our activity pack. This pack was meant only to support home learning until the Easter Holidays. We are planning a Year Group specific approach to be ready for 20th April which I am sure will support those who are now requesting a different structure.

Currently the staff are all well, however, I have been made aware today of a member of staff who has a family member in a critical condition. **The virus isn't spreading, people are spreading the virus. Covid-19, like other respiratory illnesses, spreads from person to person in close proximity. I urge you all to follow the strict guidelines that the government has issued relating to social distancing and lockdown.**

18 members of our team are self-isolating to keep themselves or members of their household safe. This in itself has been a challenge to manage. The remaining staff have been divided into two teams in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 amongst us all.

- **Team 1** have opened the school this week to a very small number of pupils who meet the Government criteria for childcare.
- **Team 2** will work in school next week.
- **Team 3** is made up of the staff who are working at home.

I would like to stress that **everyone** is working to the best of their ability during this very difficult time.



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For the children who are attending school, in order to keep children and staff safe, we have had to put increased health and safety measures in place. In line with guidance from Public Health.

1. Staff ask parent/carers every morning
 - if their child or any member of your household have a high temperature and/or a persistent cough. If the answer is 'yes' they will not be permitted to leave their child at school.
 - if members of their household are using public transport.
 - If members of their household are coming into contact with people who are infected with COVID-19
2. Increased handwashing is taking place.
3. Children and staff have to keep a 2m social distance which means they cannot play games with each other or have any physical contact. Some children are finding this very difficult.
4. Children are not able to use books or key boards.
5. Children are not able to use equipment that cannot be cleaned after each child.
6. No contact sport can be played, no ball games and no climbing equipment can be used.
7. There are increased restrictions on who can enter the school site.

It remains our intention, in spite of these guidelines, to welcome all children who are eligible for childcare. We are doing our best to make this a pleasant experience whilst ensuring the safety of everyone.

Please see below what the school are doing to support you and the children who are not at school:

New ways of working for the staff

- As mentioned above the staff have been split into three teams who are all working hard and developing new ways of communicating
- Remote access for staff to use IT systems has been set up at very short notice by our IT team to enable staff who are not allowed in school to continue to work
- Staff are having online meetings with their Year Group Teams
- Telephone conversations are taking place daily with key members of staff

Communication:

- Ms Chalfen is checking emails daily during term time and office@gsjs.barnetmail.net can be used should you need to communicate with us.
- We will continue to use ParentMail and send a weekly newsletter.
- The teachers have all written a letter to their class which you should receive by ParentMail today
- The website will be updated with new resources for each year group after the Easter Holidays – more details to follow.



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School Reports

- Since the school closed, the class teachers have been writing a mid-year report for your child. This is in lieu of a parent consultation this term. The report will update you on your child's achievements and progress so far this year. It will also include some useful next steps in their learning. It will take time to complete and check the reports and we hope that they will be ready in May.

Free School Meals

- The Government have announced that they will shortly be rolling out a national voucher system for pupils who are eligible for FSM. Ms Chalfen has communicated with eligible parents and more information on this will follow next week, once we have received the guidance.

Times Tables Rockstars Competition

We are encouraging children to get their competitive spirit going with our new TT Rockstars tournament starting next week.

Mrs Margolis has set the competition to start on **Monday 30th March at 9am** and the last points will be counted at **7pm on Thursday 2nd April**. We will announce class winners, the overall winning class and the school's top 3 scorers in the newsletter on **Friday 3rd April**.

This is an excellent way for children to keep practising their times tables, but please support your child in limiting their screen time.

Children will have their TT Rockstars password inside their Home Learning exercise book or in their Homework Diary.

Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to support you and your children. I am proud of my staff and what we have achieved under very difficult circumstances. Having just heard that the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary have tested positive for the virus, we are going to offer our support in running the country!

If you need any support or guidance please contact the school **by email** and the relevant member of staff will get in touch.

We are sad that our contact with the children will be from a distance in the coming weeks. I hope the children enjoy the letters from their class teachers and that they realise they are not forgotten.

Enjoy the sunshine on your daily walk and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Bhavsar | Head Teacher