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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am sure that many of you have been following the news about the re-opening of schools to all pupils. This is what we know from this week's announcements in Parliament:

- The **earliest** schools might 'begin to re-open' will be Monday 8th 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 22nd February (the first day after the half-term holiday), with further updates.
- When the decision to return has been made, schools will get two weeks' notice of this date.

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

Moving forwards, we will continue with everything that we have in place and keep seeking ways to keep everyone supported and motivated by using innovative ways of delivering the curriculum. We will be sending a survey to both parents and children next week to gather some wider feedback on how things are going for everyone so that we can review what we are offering.

Our approach to online learning this lockdown has been different compared to last spring. Previously, for example, we made a conscious decision not to introduce new concepts whereas this time we have tried to move the learning forwards and replicate the curriculum, as far as possible, that children would experience in school. The children have already missed out some parts of the curriculum and we did not want any gaps to widen. This approach does mean, however, that children will find some aspects of their learning more challenging and I want to applaud you all for your continued effort when things have been tough. One of the few benefits of remote learning for me has been the opportunity to see the children's work on Seesaw. The sheer variety of ways children have shown their learning has astounded me. Clicking on the children's posts is the highlight of my day.

The daily Zoom meetings are an important part of the children's learning and all children should attend as this is where the day's learning is explained and where feedback is given. This is also a time for the children to see each other and socialise through activities and games. We know of a few parents who have contacted us to explain why it is difficult for their child to attend every day but children should not be opting out of attending unless there is a good reason.

Next week's screen-free afternoon is Tuesday and in the final week of term it will be on Thursday and Friday afternoon.



Lateral Flow Testing for Staff

As mentioned last week, staff will start testing from next week. Testing will take place at home, twice a week on Sundays and Wednesdays. I have asked staff to ensure the test takes place before noon on Sunday and 6:00 pm on Wednesday. This is in order that I can alert you in time should your child's bubble need to close if a staff member's test is positive.

Free School Meals for Pupil Premium Children

We have now started using the Government's national scheme (Edenred) for vouchers which you should have all received by now. If you have any difficulty obtaining or downloading the vouchers, please contact Bridget King: finance@barham.kent.sch.uk

The vouchers will be temporarily stopped in two weeks as KCC are organising a scheme during the February half term. We will send you the details as soon as we receive them.

As ever, thank you for your continued support. This is an exceptionally difficult period for so many people but all of us in school truly appreciate the effort and time you are spending supporting your children. And for those of you who are spinning various plates, including working from home, please do not feel guilty if you are not able to support your child as much as you would like. Many of us in school are in the same boat and are fully aware of how difficult it is combining work and home education. If things become too much, please don't hesitate to contact either myself: headteacher@barham.kent.sch.uk or our Family Liaison Officer, Mrs Anderson: michelle.anderson@barham.kent.sch.uk

Have a good weekend.

Yours sincerely



Alison Higgins