

**Welcome back to our 'Virtual' start**

The Easter holidays have been and gone and it is now time to welcome you back to what is the start of our third week of virtual, home learning. I hope you enjoyed your few weeks away from 'logging in' to our 'Itslearning' portal and were able to spend some time at home, staying safe.

You may have heard the Government briefing yesterday talking about the opening of schools and when it may take place. We know as much as you regarding this and will keep you updated with any changes if and when they occur. As far as we know at the moment, we are still in the same position for the next three weeks and will continue to teach and support you and your family in whatever way we can.

In the newsletter today, we are providing you with information on teachers calling home to chat with your children, Free Schools Meals and staying safe...please take the time to read through the information as there are some important messages we want to get across.

**COMMUNICATION**

**Phone Calls:** As the school closure continues, all our teachers will be taking the time over the next week to call all the children within their class. This is to allow the children to hear the familiar voice of their teacher, talk about the home learning they are doing and ask any questions they may have. The number will come up on your phone as No Caller ID, so please do answer it, as I'm sure all children will love the opportunity to have a chat.

**Emails:** [info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk) is the easiest way to get in contact with us if you have any questions and we will do our best to help as quickly as we can.

**HOME LEARNING**

Online learning will begin again from tomorrow, 21<sup>st</sup> April through our 'itslearning' platform. Starting back into any form of routine may not necessarily be easy after a few weeks off so please don't worry. The work is there for you, but there are also a wealth of other suggestions to ease you back in: sharing a book, playing a game, writing a letter or drawing together. There are also a huge array of museum or gallery tours, music events or theatre productions to watch and share together. Take a deep breath, remove the expectation of 'school' and make the most of opportunities that come whilst at home.

If you are unable to access the online platform, as always, please get in touch by emailing [info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk)

**NSPCC****Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice and support for parents and carers (NSPCC)**

The NSPCC has created a number of resources to support parents and carers during this difficult time. Topics include:

- Parents working from home
- Children staying home alone
- Lockdown and separated parents
- How to cope with tantrums and other difficult behaviour
- Talking to a child worried about coronavirus

The advice can be found on the NSPCC website here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

### **FREE SCHOOL MEALS**

Please follow the link below and make an application for Free School Meals. If a decision comes back and you are entitled to free school meals, you will receive vouchers to support your shopping bills for your children: <https://lewisham.gov.uk/my services/education/student-pupil-support/free-school-meals-and-extra-support-for-your-child>

If you need any additional support with completing the application, please email us at [info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk). Given the current circumstances, even if you think you don't qualify - please try.

Should you find you are not eligible for the government scheme but are experiencing hardship, please contact us on [info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk)

For those entitled to Free School Meals, please come to Brindishe Manor on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April between 12noon and 3pm to pick up your food parcel. You will need to bring a large bag with you. This is only for those families who receive the FSM entitlement and not those in receipt of universal free school meals (Reception – year 2).

### **KEEPING SAFE**

We have all been encouraged to stay at home and stay safe, but for many women and men, home is not a safe place. The National Domestic Abuse helpline has seen a 25% increase in calls and online requests for help since we have been told to stay at home. Although this is a very stressful and anxious time for everyone, domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation. If you are suffering from domestic abuse of any kind, or you are worried about a friend, relative, colleague or neighbour, we encourage you to seek guidance and support straight away.

### **IMMEDIATE DANGER:**

Advice from the government is that IF you are in immediate danger:

- call 999 and ask for the police.

If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone:

- call 999, and then press 55. This will transfer your call to the relevant police force who will assist you without you having to speak.

### **Sources of support and information:**

- The National Domestic Abuse Helpline website ([www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)) provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. They can also be called, for free and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.
- Women's Aid ([www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)) has provided additional advice specifically designed for the current coronavirus outbreak, including a live chat service.
- The Men's Advice Line ([www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)) is a confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and those supporting them. It can be contacted on 0808 801 0327.

- If you are a member of the LGBT+ community, [Galop](http://www.galop.org.uk) ([www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)) runs a specialist helpline on 0800 999 5428 or email [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk).
- Finally, if you are worried about hurting the ones you love while staying at home, we encourage you to contact Respect Phoneline on 0808 8024040 ([www.respectphoneline.org.uk](http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk)) for support and advice on managing your feelings and behaviour.

#### **CHILDCARE FOR CRITICAL WORKERS**

Brindishe Green continues to remain open for the childcare provision of critical workers, where there is no alternative childcare available. The provision runs from 7.45am – 6pm. Please contact us on [info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@brindishelee.lewisham.sch.uk) if you feel you need this provision.

Kind regards,

Rachel

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