



Friday 8th January 2021

Dear parents, carers, governors, staff and friends,

This is our first whole school newsletter of 2021, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year! Although this is not the way any of us would have wanted to start the year, and the future seems uncertain for everyone, we feel we have much to be grateful for and celebrate.

Many in our school community have pulled together once again during this challenging time to support and reassure each other when things have seemed overwhelming. With very little notice, our Key Worker and Vulnerable Children Provision was set up and has been running smoothly since Tuesday. Online learning has been provided for all classes from Nursery to Year 6, and most children are learning safely from home through our virtual classrooms on Itslearning. Support is being given to families who are finding it difficult to remember log in details or access Itslearning. Devices have been ordered from the DfE and delivered to school, and are in the process of being prepared so they can be distributed to families in need. Free School Meal vouchers are also about to be distributed. And many of our children have already received a call from someone in school to check that they are feeling okay and let them know that we are all missing them (if your child hasn't received a call yet, they will next week).

If you have any questions or queries during this time, please can we ask that you use the following email addresses so that the right person can get back to you:

info@brindishegreen.lewisham.sch.uk – queries about online learning, accessing devices, Free School Meals, login details, concerns, general questions.

support@brindishegreen.lewisham.sch.uk – if you need technical support with Itslearning or Weduc

Critical/Key Worker Schooling Update

During this week we have had an increasing number of families asking for their child/ren to attend school rather than remain at home. After the initial announcement, **following advice from the local authority**, we offered places to households that had two critical workers or were classed as vulnerable according to the criteria set out by the Government. **This is to keep the school as safe as possible for everyone**, by providing for those who were in real need the care provided in school.

We are aware that the Government has advised that only one parent/carer has to be a key worker, but until we knew what the uptake would be for Keyworkers, and had offered spaces to all our vulnerable children, we have needed to remain with our initial criteria. We appreciate that it is not easy to balance working from home and supporting children's learning, but safety must come first and our aim has to be keeping the size of bubbles manageable so that Critical Worker provision can remain open as for long as possible.

We want to work with all our families, therefore applications to school can be made if there is just one critical worker at home and you feel you really need to use the provision; at present you will be placed on a waiting list. Please note that any applications made will be reviewed at the end of next week. If safe to do so, we will allocate children on a needs basis, to start during the week beginning 18th January 2021. The school will be in touch closer to the time if we are able to offer you a place.

Please remember that the message from the government and scientists is that everyone is safest at home unless it is **really impossible** to do so.

Teacher and Child Catch Up

Starting next week, we will be opening up the school cloud function on a fortnightly basis, for **you to arrange a time** for your children to have a video call with their teacher. These calls will take place **between 1pm and 3.30pm on Wednesday 13th January and Thursday 14th January** allowing the chance for your child and the teacher to **'have a catch up'**, celebrate work and talk through any worries or concerns they may have.

You will be sent a text, asking you to log-in to your Weduc App and to click on the link to book the appointment. Please email info@brindishegreen.lewisham.sch.uk if you require any further support with logging into Weduc.

Other members of staff from the Brindishe Green team will continue to telephone the children inbetween these video calls.

ItsLearning:

The increase in children accessing home learning this week has been superb. The teachers have all been exceptionally proud to see nearly everyone online, completing work and responding to feedback. Please don't forget to upload any assignments to the platform so school staff can provide feedback and next steps.

Share and Celebrate

From the start of next week, all classes will have a **'Share and Celebrate'** folder in the **Resources tab of ItsLearning**. Children can upload work, photographs and videos they have been doing during the week so the **teacher and the other children in the class** can see and celebrate the fantastic effort everyone is making. During the 'Teacher and Child Catch Up' video calls, references will be made to work uploaded and selected pieces will be recognised in a weekly praise videos.

Devices and Connecting Online:

Thank you to everyone who has emailed in or spoken to the class teacher about needing support with a device at home. The information has been gathered and before the weekend, those who have been allocated a device based on need will have received a letter with arrangements for how to pick it up from school.

We have also ordered a number of 30GB SIM cards which will be distributed to families in need of extra data in order to access the online learning. If you do not have fixed broadband at home and your child is not learning in our classrooms, please visit <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/about-increasing-mobile-data> for details of a scheme that may be of assistance to you. If you think you might be eligible for this support, please contact the school office.

As always, if you or your child is struggling to log in to the online learning platform or your child does not have access to a device, please email info@brindishegreen.lewisham.sch.uk

The BG Students Page

Don't forget to log in to the BG Students Page where there will be weekly assemblies and access to a large selection of extra websites, resources and projects. Important information about mental health, online safety and well-being will also be included.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Listed below are ideas with helpful web links to support your child's wellbeing while they are at home.

- **Help others** - Just getting your child to help other people can make them feel better. You could arrange a virtual playdate on a video call with family and friends to restore positivity about the world.
- **Look after your body** - Encouraging your child to look after their body by eating healthy food, drinking plenty of water and exercising at home, e.g. Joe Wicks online or logging onto *Itslearning* to follow Sportacus fitness video's. Also a walk in the park or a bike ride/scoot can help children to keep fit, builds stamina and ensures they are getting fresh air.
- **Place an emphasis on resilience and strength** - Focus on your child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.
- **Looking after your feelings** - If your child is feeling anxious, try getting them to think about good things that make them happy and that are going well at the moment. You can always get them to keep a diary and write down or draw about how they are feeling.
- **Relax** - There are lots of different ways that your child can relax, which will help them take notice of the present moment, it will also help them develop their creative side:
 - Arts and crafts, such as drawing, painting, collage, sewing, craft kits.
 - Upcycling (using items you would recycle to build and create something new)
 - Colouring
 - Singing or listening to music
 - Writing a story
 - Creating their own dance routines to music
 - Yoga or mindfulness

And finally....thank you!

We would just like to take this opportunity to thank everyone again for their on-going support, patience and best wishes during this very challenging time.

As a senior leadership team, we would also like to thank all our staff who have pulled together, are working tirelessly either at home (many with their own children/families) or in school, and who are doing everything they can to provide fantastic learning opportunities that suit the needs of most of our children and families. We can not thank you enough!

Best wishes to you all – and your families,

The Brindishe Green Senior Leadership Team