



Breakspeare School
Gallows Hill Lane
Abbots Langley
Hertfordshire
WD5 0BU

Tel: 01923 263645
Fax: 01923 260087

Meadow Wood School
Coldharbour Lane
Bushey
Hertfordshire
WD23 4NN

Tel: 020 8 4204720
Fax: 020 8 4205497

admin@breakspeare.herts.sch.uk

admin@meadowwood.herts.sch.uk

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We have all tried to adapt to our new reality during the last two weeks. Please note important UPDATES ON

- How long this disturbance will last
- EHCP meetings
- Free school meals
- Keeping safe
- Provision at school
- Breakspeare School's new unit
- Student welfare
- Communication with families

How long will this disturbance last. In the school sector the DfE initially implemented the present changes and guidance for three weeks. Based on my liaison with HCC it is everybody's understanding that the schools' current situation will continue after Easter; plus it is unlikely that schooling will return to 'normal' this academic year. However it is too early to speculate what the school's provision will be during the summer term. We don't know what will happen when 'lock down' finishes as our provision is highly dependent on staff availability.

EHCP meetings. We will inform you of a new EHCP meeting date for those meetings that have been cancelled and send an invitation for the regular summer term ones. Meetings will be rescheduled commencing 27th April and will take place either on Microsoft Teams or via the telephone. Amanda and Linda will get in touch with you after Easter.

Free school meals. Please note that any changes that may have occurred to your family circumstances may mean that your child is entitled to receive free school meals. Please check your eligibility via www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals My admin office is more than happy to help you with the process – just call to the Breakspeare office and say that you would like to discuss free school meals.

Keeping safe. To heighten your family's safety measures. It is extremely important for us to work together to prohibit the COVID-19 virus spreading and to keep each other safe.

- Follow 'lock down' protocol in any other areas of your family life.
- Do not visit anybody.
- Do not allow visitors into your home.
- Minimise visits beyond home for food, health and work if you can't work at home.
- Change your and your child's clothes on arrival home after school, work, visiting the hospital etc. - if possible have a bath or shower.
- Avoid contamination with clean clothes.
- Wash hands or/and disinfect them on arrival home before touching anything.
- Make sure that you wash your hands after handling school/work clothes.
- Disinfect/wash your phone, credit card holder, keys, your glasses etc. on arrival home.

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, don't touch your face and keep a 2 metre social distance whenever you can. Please help everybody to stay safe.

Please take care of yourself, your child/children and other people in the community by abiding the Public Health advice.

Provision at school. Depending on an individual family's circumstances and our risk assessment we have families in our school community from three groups – we have families who have chosen to keep their child at home, we have families who would prefer a school placement and we have families for whom we have been able to offer a placement.

It is with regret that we are not able to offer placements for all families who would prefer that their child attends school during this disturbance. It was an extremely difficult decision for us to withdraw placements for some children. Our decisions are based on our risk assessment of a child's needs and scrutinising keyworker status. We need to maximise the safety of our students and staff in line with COVID-19 guidance: Currently the students who are attending school are taken care of either individually or in a group of two students.

Please note that when we are in the position to accommodate more students (but not all) we will prioritise our offer for those who have particular individual needs and whose parents would prefer a school placement.

We have planned to provide an Easter provision for a very small number of students.

Breakspeare new unit. Our new unit is a priority for HCC's school building department; planning and preparation continues. However there may be a delay in its completion for the September start.

Communication with families. It has been extremely positive to hear your and our teachers' positive feedback about communication via EDMODO and Microsoft Teams. We have been delighted to see photos of your child's home activities that many of you have posted. If you haven't yet engaged with this new way of home-school liaison please give it a go.

We are very realistic about delivering home education - family situations are unique and our students/your children are different – you make choices that are right for your family. To us one key element of our new way of communicating with families is to maintain a regular link between school and home. Our teachers are very willing to do what they can to support your child during this difficult situation. Our teachers will continue keeping in touch with you by phone after Easter.

Our Facebook page 'The Sunflower Federation Schools' has been a great success. We post short daily videos such as songs, craft and other activities to do with your child. Occasionally there may be a post that is aimed for 'adults only' – such as yesterday's NHS video about how to support children during Self-Isolation. Today Mr Baked Potato gives us good advice on how to stay safe.

Student welfare. Please get in touch with myself or Darren if you have concerns about your child's welfare. We have already written a number of supporting letters to different agencies on some parents' request and liaised with 0-25 team for home support. We are here to help you.

Diagnosis of COVID-19. If your child or any family member needs to self-isolate or gets a diagnosis of COVID-19 during the Easter break, you MUST let us know by leaving a message at the Breakspeare school office. We have one confirmed case of C-19 amongst Breakspeare students. This child has been absent from school for a significant period of time; it is anticipated that the student concerned will be fully recovered and is currently doing well. No further action is needed in our school community. We have members of staff, children and their family members who are self-isolating because of having symptoms.

I'm extremely proud of my staff who have continued to work at high standards providing a positive school experience for students both at home and at school and for maintaining regular communication with yourselves during this exceptionally challenging time.

Thank you for your words of support.

Take care. Keep safe.

Best wishes - Merja