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**Aim High....Fly High**

Dear parents & carers

Welcome back to our virtual summer term. I hope that you are all keeping well. School has stayed open to provide childcare for key worker and vulnerable families over the Easter break and I would like to thank Mr Walker, Miss Hobbs, Mrs Shannon, Mrs Clarke, Mrs Johnston, Miss Medley, Mrs Rigby and Mrs Paterson who have supported me in enabling this to happen.

Teachers have been putting together a home learning package for the next half term and this is will be available on the school website from Monday 20th April, under the new tab, *home learning during school closure*.

I have been contacted by parents with differing views of what home learning should look like. Some would like to replicate a school day while the focus for others is on spending quality time together. I suspect that most people fit somewhere in between. There have also been suggestions for how to present this home learning. I have been in constant contact with Heads locally, and further afield, since schools closed and approaches differ widely. This is an unprecedented time and all schools are doing their best – there is no right way to do this.

I am very aware that the families in our community are all different and the pressures that you are facing at the moment are different too. Some of you have limited internet access, others don’t have a device for each child. Some of you are working long hours in challenging environments and some of you are experiencing financial uncertainty. I can only imagine the pressure of trying to work from home whilst supervising the home learning of more than one child. Even trained teachers are finding this a challenge! The wellbeing of you all, both parents and children, is the most important thing at this time.

I have really enjoyed seeing the range of activities you have been doing at home, including, jam making, pressing flowers, cooking, dog training, den making, drawing, walks, bike rides and gardening. These are creating such special memories for your children during this very strange time.

Home learning for the next half term for years 1-6, consists of 5 maths activities per week, 4 English activities and an ongoing topic titled *‘My family, home and garden’* which includes science, history, geography, art, design technology etc. It has been designed to be an open-ended topic that can be completed by siblings (or virtually, by friends). We feel having a shared learning goal should make tasks more manageable for families. Learning activities for Sheldrakes are also detailed on the website. If you are able, we expect to see one piece of work returned each week which will be marked by the class teacher.

We know that home learning will look different in every household and will often be different from one day to the next. Some days it just won’t happen … and that’s ok.

There are numerous links on the school website for further activities should you wish to do more and take learning in a different direction. As I write, the government have announced that the BBC are providing learning opportunities via the ‘red button’ or online. These can all supplement the learning that class teachers are providing.

**Keeping in touch**

Class email addresses have been set up for you to contact teachers to submit activities and to ask questions about learning – email addresses are at the foot of this letter. Class emails will be checked during school opening hours but please be aware that teachers may also be setting and supervising activities in school, supervising the home learning of their own children, caring for unwell members of their own family or indeed, be unwell themselves, so immediate responses may not be possible. Miss Hobbs and Mr Walker have their Easter break until 27th April. Miss Medley/Mrs Johnston will pick up any enquiries to these accounts.

All general queries should continue to be addressed to office@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

To support wellbeing, teachers will contact families fortnightly by telephone to check how you’re all getting on. These will not be learning conferences to check up on academic work (although of course the children may ask or talk about how their learning is going) but are instead intended as a way of keeping in touch.

**Re-opening**

There is still much speculation about when schools will re-open and as soon as I receive information from DfE and the local authority, I will be in touch.

**Free School Meals Eligibility (Income related)**

The current crisis has had significant impact on the financial circumstances of many families.  As a result, more of you may now be eligible for free school meals and we are keen to make sure you get the support you need, both short term with meals / vouchers but longer term in terms of school’s support via the pupil premium.   The local authority have put together a letter that can be accessed via this link - [Letter to parents](https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/asset-library/fsm-letter-to-parents-ccc.pdf).  You can register using the web link in the document.

Those families who are already eligible should by now have received an email from Edenred, the organisation contracted by the government to provide meal vouchers. If you haven’t, do get in touch and we will do our best to help you.

**Childcare for key workers and vulnerable families**

School will continue to be open for children from these families. Please give us as much notice as possible regarding the days that you require childcare so that we can ensure that we have enough staff on site. School transport will only run if we know that you need it so please keep us informed of your requirements. We will continue to send out booking forms to be returned on Fridays.

School will continue to remain open for childcare using a skeleton staff in the classroom as well as in the office. We will endeavour to respond to any queries quickly but immediate responses may not be possible.

Go easy on yourselves, you are all doing your best during a really tough time. We are thinking of you and can’t wait to see you all again as soon as it is safe to do so.

Take care.

Suzanne Blackburne-Maze

Headteacher

**Class email addresses**

Sheldrakes@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

Lapwings@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

Puffins@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

Blackbird@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

Wren@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

Hawks@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

Skylarks@duxford.cambs.sch.uk

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