

Dear Parents/Carers,

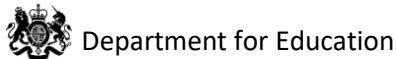
I hope you all had a restful Easter break and your children enjoyed engaging in the project work our teachers set over the two-week period. Firstly, I would like to say welcome to our very first remote summer term!

We've all had to adapt to new ways of working, so I wanted to take the opportunity to say what an amazing job you're doing supporting your child's wellbeing and learning during this time. It has definitely been a strange and challenging time, so it's ok if you and your child feel wobbly and worried at the moment. We are here for you every step of the way as we figure this all out together, taking one day at a time.

All of my team are on a rota, providing childcare for the children of key workers and vulnerable children based at Ferndown Upper School that has been greatly valued. Many of us have worked throughout the Easter period, preparing online as well as topic curriculum resources, video models, making contact with all parents/ carers each week, collaborating with Dorset Council and returning data on a daily basis to the DfE. In addition, we have arranged Free School Meal vouchers for all parents/ carers entitled to this allowance. Nationally, this has not been a straightforward process for all schools. However, we have ensured that we have done all we can to provide for our families with the support they need with my Finance Officer and myself spending nearly four hours in Tesco's to buy pre-paid cards (which they would only sell in small individual batch transactions), on the first Sunday afternoon after the schools 'closed'. This was followed by arranging for each parent/ carer of a child entitled to FSMs to receive a four-week allowance in a Sodexo voucher scheme arranged via Dorset Council. We have applied for further vouchers through the DfE's national scheme, however, due to the huge number of schools who have signed up to this initiative there is a backlog with our request still pending after over a week. I have therefore made the decision for our school to purchase next week's FSM voucher's via Sodexo whilst waiting for the DfE's scheme to take effect as that was the only way that I could be sure that our children received their entitlement. In addition, we have signed up to Fareshare, so Mrs Mein and I were able to bag up and distribute food to a few families in need as we strive to do all we can to support everyone during this time.

We appreciate that home learning with our own children is a challenge but please be assured that we can only do our best as we all work together. When your child returns to school, we will strive to ensure that we fill any gaps that may have been missed in their learning during this time. As a starting point, there will be 'catch up' interventions, focused after school learning clubs and bespoke home learning programmes for each year group. So please just do the best you can in these exceptional circumstances, as your best is good enough. All parents/ carers were sent a Parent Mail on Friday explaining about assessment in Maths and English this week. Please can I ask that when a staff member contacts you by phone, you provide them with any assessment scores you have for your child each week. The instructions are inside the weekly folder that explains to children about these assessments.

In addition, there are online tutoring, videos and PowerPoints for pupils to model and guide them in their home learning tasks. The Department for Education (DfE), has also launched the following excellent learning resources:



Launch of the Oak National Academy online classroom and resource hub

The sector-led Oak National Academy has today launched its online classroom and resource hub. The Academy offers 180 video lessons each week for schools to use, across a broad range of subjects. The lessons cover children in Reception through to Year 10 and are free to use by both teachers and young people.

The Oak National Academy can be accessed here:

- <https://www.thenational.academy/>

Launch of BBC Bitesize

The BBC has today launched an education package across TV and online, featuring celebrities and teachers, helping to keep children learning at home and supporting parents.

BBC Bitesize can be accessed here:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Get help with technology and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education on Sunday 19 April, laptops and tablets will be made available to help the most disadvantaged young people access online learning and social care services. Young people and families eligible for devices must not already have access to one, and must be in one of the following groups:

- Children with a social worker
- Care leavers
- Disadvantaged children in Year 10, ahead of sitting their GCSEs next year

Responsible bodies will need to work with schools to identify eligible young people, and then place an order through our website when it launches later this week. Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children do not have an internet connection, they will also receive a 4G router.

Schools will be able to keep these devices once they've reopened, allowing children and young people to continue to learn and receive support at home in the future.

Any 16 to 19-year olds in education without a suitable device and/or connectivity to study remotely and whose family can't afford these costs will also be eligible for support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Decisions on support will be made by education providers.

Funding and financial support for education, early years and children's social care

We have published guidance that sets out the financial support that is available for different types of education, early years and children's social care providers in England.

This guidance can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>

Guidance for parents and carers on supporting their children's education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

We have published information, guidance and support for parents and carers of children who are learning at home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Guidance on helping children aged 2 to 4 learn at home can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping primary school aged children learn at home can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping children with special educational needs and disabilities learn at home can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Updated guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings

The guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings has been updated with additional information on the support available for parents, online educational resources and support for vulnerable children.

The guidance can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Guidance on supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

The guidance for education settings and local authorities on supporting vulnerable children and young people has been updated. This update includes clarification to the existing guidance on attendance.

This guidance can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday

10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.

Handwashing advice

It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides.

The latest guidance and video on hand washing can be found at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

The e-Bug project is led by Public Health England and has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene.

Resources are currently available for KS1, KS2 and KS3 and can be used in various settings including schools and at home:

- <https://e-bug.eu/>

Please could you let us know each week how you are getting on so we can further support you.

Remember, if you have any concerns about helping your child learn or you need any other support from the school, please let us know by contacting us by email at office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk or telephone (01202) 872474.

We miss the children very much, but we must follow the government's guidance to keep everyone in our community safe. So, we're carrying on with our virtual home learning provision, weekly calls and child care provision for vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers. But just because we're not all in the same building, doesn't mean we can't have some fun together! Your children will have lots of activities they can get stuck into over the summer term – so keep a close eye on our school's official Twitter feed: @west_moors- see, https://twitter.com/west_moors?lang=en, where Mrs Burns has uploaded the children's first video challenge! Please send us in any short videos to add to this thread sharing our children's unique dance moves! We also love seeing the children's fantastic learning at home – please keep sending their work in by post, taking a picture and sending via email as we would like to again showcase it on our school's Twitter feed.

You will know from media reports, that we will be allowed to re-open when the Government considers it safe to do based on scientific evidence but rest assured that we'll continue doing our utmost to keep your child learning and our school community connected. Please keep safe and take good care.

We are looking our summer term!

Warm regards,

Deborah

Dr Deborah Craddock