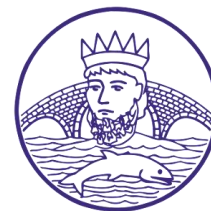


# King Athelstan Primary School

Villiers Road, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 3AR  
Tel: 020 8546 8210 Fax: 020 8547 2732

admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org  
www.kingathelstan.kingston.sch.uk



Headteacher: Emily Newton

7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your support over the last few days. So much has changed so quickly and your prompt responses when asked for information has been much appreciated. We wanted to give you a general update and overview of how things are being organised at the moment. Obviously, all arrangements are subject to change. A social story explaining the lockdown has been attached and will be uploaded to Google Classrooms to support you in discussing this with your child if needed.

## Online learning

The majority of children are completing learning at home via Google Classroom. This is being led by class teachers who are off-site, manning the online classrooms full time. You will note that online learning has moved on considerably since the first lockdown. Lessons are varied and some have a video element that is pre-recorded to enable families to access them at a convenient time. Teachers are able to comment on assignments that are submitted. Don't forget that, in addition, Oak Academy and all the usual online learning opportunities (TimesTablesRockstars, j2e etc) are always available. You can still look at the lockdown learning from last year on the school website which also has the staff story time videos and much more! The website is here:

<https://www.kingathelstan.kingston.sch.uk/covid-19-home-learning/>.

We know that managing learning at home is very challenging for many reasons. Please prioritise reading, writing and maths where time and resources are stretched. Remember, you can watch our learning videos easily on mobile phones which might ease pressure on devices. You can also access Google Classroom via a Playstation 4 or X-Box one - please see this link for instructions:

<https://sway.office.com/kaOyFbKLeLuliOWf>

You will need a keyboard to use the full features. Here is a link to an affordable keyboard:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Acco-Kensington-6010715-ValuKeyboard-Wired/dp/B0001ZN7AO/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?dchild=1&keywords=usb+keyboard&qid=1609936600&sr=8-3](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Acco-Kensington-6010715-ValuKeyboard-Wired/dp/B0001ZN7AO/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=usb+keyboard&qid=1609936600&sr=8-3)

Although assignments have a deadline, this is to support teachers in providing timely feedback. Do not worry if you need to submit work after the deadline to fit around your family's needs. Do bear in mind, however, that work submitted after the deadline may take longer to respond to.

As the weeks progress you will find that our subject specialist teachers will be developing their own classrooms where they will be uploading assignments, too. We may try a live session once in a while, however do not intend to move to live lessons as this is not easy for everyone to access.

## Learning in school

A small number of children are learning in school. We had a huge number of requests for places and unfortunately, we were unable to accommodate them all due to significant pressure on staffing and in order to keep numbers low enough to maintain safety for those in most need. This is being staffed by TAs, Nursery Nurses and the Inclusion Team. It is important for parents/carers to



understand that in this lockdown, unlike the first, school remains responsible for making 'best endeavours' to deliver provision within Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The majority of our TAs are employed specifically to do this, leaving very few staff to manage other children on site. The children in school are completing the same online learning in small year-group bubbles. We risk-assessed this in light of the significant increase in transmission rates and decided that we could only organise the children in this way to protect them and our staff as much as possible from this new highly contagious strain of COVID-19. Staff do not cross bubbles (unless there is a healthy and safety emergency) and we are not able to increase the size of bubbles as we feel this risk is unacceptably high, given the size of spaces and staffing ratios. The children in school will get a small amount of subject specialist teaching in which the teachers will remain socially distanced from them, in order to provide their supporting adults with administrative time.

### Free School Meals

Children who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), **not** the Key Stage 1 Universal Free School Meals (UiFSM), and who are **not** in school will have received their voucher via Wonde by email yesterday. Please note that as this is funded by the school and not the government this time, it is for the value of £11.50 as this is the exact amount we receive per child as a school.

### Food Bank

Food Bank vouchers are different from FSM vouchers. The school is able to issue Food Bank vouchers to any family in urgent need of food. You can use the vouchers to collect food from various locations locally. In order to obtain a Food Bank voucher, please send an email to [admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org).

### Critical Workers

Over the weekend we had an overwhelming number of requests for critical worker places. We used the Government's criteria to assess the needs and spoke to a number of families on Monday to ensure we had really accurate information on which to base our decisions. As you can imagine, this was incredibly challenging and emotive. We had to make difficult decisions, prioritising families where there are 2 critical workers and those with exceptional needs. We are aware that **all** families are experiencing difficulties and stresses at this time and that there are emotional and financial implications for everyone. However, it is simply not possible or safe to accommodate everyone who requested a place. The whole point of the lockdown is to try to halt the rapidly rising infection rates. We cannot compromise the safety of our community. In order to increase safety we:

- Keep to small year-group bubbles
- Do not mix staff across bubbles
- Only offer full-time places

The DfE updated guidance yesterday following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday. The guidance states:

*"During the period of national lockdown, schools and colleges should only allow vulnerable children and children of critical workers to attend. Children with at least one parent or carer who is listed as a critical worker are eligible for a school place."*

It is important to note that this is guidance only. Every school is different and schools make decisions based on their own contexts and risk assessments. At King Athelstan, we are currently unable to offer a school place to every child where at least one parent or carer is a critical worker without compromising the health and safety of everyone on site. This is not a decision we have

taken lightly. We therefore request that families consider carefully their requests for places. All families are having to juggle and work from home, often with one device to work from and learn, or no device. However, we all have to make compromises at a time like this. We are asking that, where at least one parent/carer is working from home, children are kept at home if at all possible. We continue to risk assess the situation and will offer more places if and when we are in a position to do so safely.

### Nursery

DfE have now issued two contradictory pieces of guidance around nurseries. In the Contingency Framework guidance it states "school-based nurseries in primary schools have the discretion to follow the arrangements for the primary school." As this was issued first, it is what we have based our initial decisions on.

In the 'Stay at Home Guidance on Childcare' it states "Early Years settings (including nurseries and childminders) remain open". As a local authority we are seeking further clarification. In either case, our risk assessment does not deem it safe to fully open our school nursery due to potential rates of transmission between 30 children and 3 staff in one classroom in the morning, and the same again each afternoon with a different group of children in the same room with the same adults. This is the view of the majority of Kingston schools. We will continue to keep this under review both in terms of DfE guidance and our own risk assessment.

To be clear, all our staff are working full-time on the teaching, learning and care for all children. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that one in 30 people in London currently have the virus. Please support our community by following the lockdown rules. Please also make use of the 30-minute rapid testing available at Kingston University and Chessington School for members of school communities without COVID-19 symptoms (see email sent on 5<sup>th</sup> January).

If your child is attending school during this period, we are expecting your family to take particular care to adhere to government guidance (and the same expectation has been communicated to staff) in order that we are able to safeguard the community on site and maintain the current level of operation.

Your emailed messages of support and encouragement mean a lot to the staff team here; thank you for taking the time to send them. As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch regarding issues with Google Classrooms or any other challenges your family is experiencing. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are also available for general advice or help in accessing services where things are very difficult.

Yours sincerely,



Emily Newton

Headteacher