



The Hills Academy

Stancliffe Road, Bedford. MK41 9AT

Telephone: (01234) 266498

e-mail: office@thehillsacademy.co.uk

Web: www.thehillsacademy.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Moya Whitehead

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for your patience and all the lovely emails we have received from you – your support means a lot to the staff.

As you are aware from the announcement made yesterday, school will be shut to all but identified vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Please can we ask you to avoid leaving your children with relatives who are 70+ due to the increased risk of infection.

key workers

such as those whose parents are on the front line with the fight against the virus in the NHS, emergency services, social workers, teachers and school workers, care workers and those involved in the delivery of our vital supply chains including those who work in supermarkets and food stores.

If you are/think you are a key worker (we are not expecting a finalised list from the government until tomorrow) and either a **single parent** or **you and your partner** is also a key worker then you need to email us on keyworker@thehillsacademy.co.uk URGENTLY by the end of the day stating:

- Child's name
- Your and where applicable, your partner's job
- Year group
- Hours needed – we will offer wrap around care as usual if it is needed but we need to consider staffing
- Is Easter holiday care needed?
- Usual days of working – accepting that you might need to work more to provide services and we can be flexible around this

This will allow us to prepare. We will get back to you, hopefully tomorrow, to confirm your family qualification for this provision.

We will be getting in touch with the parents/carers of our most vulnerable, but if you think your child is particularly vulnerable and we have missed you off the list, then you can also email headteacher@thehillsacademy.co.uk for advice on this.

It is our intention, if needed, to remain open over the Easter break for these children.

Learning at home from Monday 23rd March

The school intends to continue to provide learning plans for you via the website and will add further resources as we source them.

The BBC are going to make daily education shows available for different year groups on BBC iplayer and their BBC Bitesize content will be expanded – it is already a great place to go:

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

You might also like to let your child lead a strand of learning for themselves – talk about something they are interested in and let them do online research or a related piece of art, music etc.

The learning activities set by the school for your child's year group are laid out as A, B, C – with B being set at the Middle. You know your own child, but if you are not sure then start at the middle – you can always move up to extend or down if he/she is finding it challenging. From Monday you will be able to photograph or scan this set work and send it to the new email address for your class (test email should have been received). Teachers will still be providing supervision for some children so they will get back to you with short feedback as quickly as they can.

Teaching your own child at home can be tough – my first attempt with my daughter yesterday ended with permanent exclusion – ha ha – poor girl! Be patient and do it in bite sized chunks. If it ends in tears and frustration take a break and come back to it later – it's not the end of the world. Remember that praise is key, you should have at least 5 praise moments to every 'even better if' – try to tone your words – children put up barriers when they hear words like "that's wrong" or "no – not like that". Sometimes it is better to let them get it wrong or skip a question and make a note to return to it later. If you are struggling and would like advice on strategies (rather than technical content) then do email me and I will try and get back to you as quickly as I can. Children like routines, so draw up a timetable together so they know what is expected of them and make sure you give yourself plenty of time out too – don't let home school become all consuming. Remember that it isn't all reading, writing and maths and that the arts, sciences, humanities, moral education and physical activity are just as vital. Good Luck and who knows you might all enjoy the adventure!

I am currently investigating how we can support children who are entitled to free school meals but will not be in school and will contact those families when we have a solution. If any family finds themselves suffering from food hardship please get in touch because I can refer you to the Bedford Foodbank.

If you are a retired or currently not working key worker who chooses to return to work during this crisis then please email us and we should be able to care for your child.

All the very best

Moya