



Garlinge Primary School and Nursery

11th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, may I wish you all a very Happy New Year and I certainly hope that 2021 is a considerable improvement on 2020. As we start this new year, I am sure that it wouldn't have escaped your notice that we have also started with the leadership changes that we told you about at Garlinge. I am now working across some other schools too, but I am very pleased with the start that Mr Cope and Mrs Northrop have made in their new roles of Heads of School. Whilst it has been by no means an easy task with the various changes that the government made at such short notice, they have led the staff team calmly and expertly and I have every confidence that they will continue to do so.

You will also have noticed that we have made what we consider to be considerable improvements to the Home Learning that we are able to offer our pupils. Ever since the first lockdown we have been looking at online platforms and ways that we can make the Home Learning more interesting for the pupils as well as supportive to parents and we hope that you agree that you have found this to be the case. Every child is now offered three live Zoom lessons per day as well as a whole range of other resources, videos and ideas that are on our school website. We are also still happy to print work packs off for pupils if they need these – please contact the school office if this is the case for you.

Whilst we recognise that this is very exciting for pupils and teachers alike, we must also realise that this is both new technology that we are working with, as well as a very new way of teaching for our staff. With both of these aspects I would ask you to bear with us and work with us if there are any minor teething problems and please do let us know if you need any further guidance in order to access these lessons. The staff have been extremely receptive to these changes and have enjoyed picking up many new skills whilst putting this system in place. Whilst everyone has their own opinion on the roles of schools during this pandemic, I can honestly say that I am humbled by the effort and hard work that I have seen from all the staff at Garlinge for the good of our pupils.

There has also been much in the media regarding the provision of laptops and tablets to some pupils if they are eligible. I would like to update you as to the exact position with this scheme as it is not always accurately reported. We are eligible for a good number of these devices, but we were only able to complete our order this morning, once we received an email from the DfE. Once these devices have been delivered to school they will then need to be set up by our IT team and then we will look into allocating them to pupils as soon as possible.

We are also looking to continue to enhance what we are offering, so please keep an eye on the school website and our Weduc app as new ideas will be posted on there. Finally with regard to our Home Learning, we pride ourselves on being reflective and whilst the Education Secretary suggested that parents complain to Ofsted if they feel that it is not sufficient, I feel it would be more impactful to let us know of any concerns and we will certainly work together to make any improvements. We always value your feedback and there have been a number of aspects that we have improved during the course of the last few months as a result of parental feedback. It has also been very pleasing to be able to pass on your emails of positive feedback to staff, so by all means keep them coming!

In conclusion, I would just like to re-iterate how important it is to us that you stay safe and support us in keeping the children and staff safe at Garlinge. We have followed government guidance very closely with regard to Key Worker and Vulnerable status and we would be very grateful if you could ensure that your children are not sent to school if they have any symptoms of Covid or are suffering from any other illness. It is much better for you to assess an illness at home for a day than to have to send a whole Key Worker bubble home. We are very grateful for your support with this.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Williams".

James Williams
Headteacher