



Somerville Federation

Somerville Primary School and Somerville Nursery School

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Executive Headteacher – Mr M J Forber

11th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I wanted to bring you an update on several matters as it has now been 3 weeks since we were asked to close the school on 20th March 2020 as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Childcare Provision.

Thanks to Somerville Nursery and Primary School staff we have been able to provide childcare for between 20 and 30 children each day on a daily basis at the Primary School site. 70 children were registered initially and the days they have required support have been accommodated. The childcare provision has been able to care for the children of Key workers and vulnerable children on a daily basis from 8.00am to 5.45pm. A huge thank you to all of the staff involved in the rota including those cleaning staff who have deep cleaned the school and classrooms after each day as well as the kitchen staff who have come in each day to make and provide the free school meal children with lunches for collection. I would like to say a thank you especially to Miss Little and the OTIS the owl club staff who have been on hand every day to cater for the children at the start of the day and after 4.30pm. A special thanks to Mr Hardman who has opened the school every day since its closure and been on hand to set up tables, clean areas and to close the school.

Working from home.

A working from home page exists on the school website and is updated regularly with new information. The latest update on 7th April 2020 now includes additional online resources recommended by the DFE for every subject possible. From 20th April 2020 the BBC will be delivering a range of programmes for children to engage in daily to support working from home for children. I have also asked the staff to look at additional resources that they can provide parents during the extended closure of schools and moving forward. Staff are currently looking at what resources they can provide parents through the internet to support learning for after the 2 week Spring Holiday. We are not expecting parents and carers to teach the children. Just do what you can to support your child, you can't be expected to replace school. More importantly you will have your own daily routines and own issues to deal with during this pandemic. The most important message is to keep yourselves safe and look after each other.

Free School Meal Vouchers.

Since we stopped providing school packed lunches to children and moved to sending out vouchers (which has not been without its difficulties) we now have four possible groups of parents.

Group 1. We have issued £7,587.80 worth of online vouchers to parents and carers through a system called WONDE to all of those 213 children who were already registered and eligible for free school meals and had not been collecting a lunch from the school kitchen. 20 of these parents have still not clicked on the link sent to their mobile phone and we have not been able to send them an email voucher as we do not have an email address for them even after sending several texts to their registered mobile phone number. Well done to the 193 who have downloaded their supermarket vouchers and started to use them!

Group 2. We have issued 26 online vouchers to parents and carers using WONDE for all those who were newly registered and eligible for free school meals since 25th March 2020.

Group 3. We have 7 parents who have registered since 30th March 2020 and 13 parents at the Nursery School who have not received any vouchers yet as we await the government voucher system Edenred to start working. We have not been able to simply send more vouchers using the WONDE system as the government has now confirmed on 7th April 2020 that they will not reimburse schools if they use any system other than their own government system.

Group 4. We have a small group of parents who have recently started to claim Universal Credit or who have previously been eligible but never registered for free school meals. If your circumstances have recently changed or you did not realise that your child was not registered for free school meals please click on this link <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral/> and apply for free school meals for your child. We will then get vouchers out to you as soon as this is possible and the government system starts working.

Still don't know if you are eligible for free school meals or think your child should be getting the vouchers and has not yet- I have put this simple guide together for you to take a look at.



FSM Simple guide to
free school meals.pdf

I have tried more than 100 (yes, not an exaggeration!) times to upload vouchers to the new government system Edenred to ensure the groups above have the correct value of vouchers moving forward and especially if they have not had any vouchers at all. I have also tried in the middle of the night to upload the vouchers to send out to parents. However after several emails to the government voucher service relating to this and informing them of the distress that this has caused several of you not yet receiving any vouchers, I have had a response this morning 11th April 2020 explaining simply that their system has not been able to cope with the unprecedented amount of orders. They intend to have new servers to cope with the numbers after the Bank Holiday weekend and have stated for me not to try again until after the Bank Holiday weekend when they hope to have improved their service to cope. I will therefore continue to try again after the Bank Holiday weekend to order the vouchers again for everyone registered and entitled and hopefully it will not take 100 attempts before we have success.

Isolation and those affected by COVID-19 symptoms

A small number of staff have been self-isolating since the pandemic started and especially since new guidance from the government was updated regarding the lockdown and those with various health conditions. A small number of staff have also struggled with their own symptoms of unconfirmed Coronavirus and are now thankfully starting to recover fully.

With regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mr Forber'.

Mr Forber
Executive Headteacher