

15th April 2020

Dear Families,

I am writing further to my letter dated 3rd April to let you know the school's current position on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

On 9th April, we recorded and sent out our version of "It Must Be Love" and we would like to thank you for your positive feedback and kind words shared over social media. The reason we chose this song was because of the message contained within it, namely that we miss not having your children in school and we are thinking of them, and yourselves during these challenging times.

We fully acknowledge the additional strain that you will be under and our commitment has been, and remains, to keep in regular contact with you, through email or telephone contact, both during term-time and through the Easter holidays; to send home weekly personalised learning ideas and being available to signpost to other services where necessary. We hope that you have felt able to ask your child's class teacher for any additional support that you need and we recognise that this will look very different for each of you, depending on your personal circumstances.

As outlined previously, we have been adding content and resources to our website for you to share with your child and we will continue to update these on a regular basis. Please visit <https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/page/?title=Coronavirus+Home+Resources&pid=235> for a wide range of resources that we hope you will find useful. If you require additional support from social care colleagues, please contact the **Bromley Children's Disability Team on 020 8313 4511 or for out-of-hours emergencies only (5:00pm-8:30am and weekends) on 0300 303 8671. Alternatively, please email disabledchildrensteam@bromley.gov.uk**. If your child has medical needs and you require any additional support from our nursing colleagues, please contact them on 0300 330 5777. We know that many of you may require other forms of practical assistance and it may be that the Bromley council volunteer network can help with activities such as shopping, collecting medicines or parcels; walking the dog, etc and they can be contacted at <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/requestforassistanceform>

As you will be aware, next Monday 20th April would have been the first day of the Summer Term, but as it stands, the government and medical advice remains unchanged, namely that "every child who can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the chance of the virus spreading" and "the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society". The government has also asked schools "to provide child care for a limited number of children – those who are particularly vulnerable and those whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home". As a school, our position has always been, and remains, to follow the medical advice and the government's

directive that “the single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives”. This approach remains the approach adopted by special schools both locally and nationally.

As a school, we are looking at any additional ways in which we can support you in these uncertain times. Many of you have mentioned using technology to keep in touch and we are actively exploring different options at the moment. There may be other ways in which you feel we can support you and please do let your child’s class teacher know if there is anything else we can do. Through our conversations, we know that some of you have asked about the possibility of your child coming into school and our position remains that every child who can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. Any requests *for* support involving a child coming into school will be formally assessed using the Local Authority’s Collaborative Risk Assessment Model as we feel that this is the most open and transparent way to shape decision-making. Through this process, the following risks across home and school will be considered: the risks to the child, including safeguarding, physical health and emotional wellbeing; the risks to the family, including physical health and emotional wellbeing; and the risks to the school setting, including the safety of other children and staff.

If you would like us to consider whether or not it is appropriate for your child to come into school, we would ask you to outline:

- the potential risks / advantages of your child being at home;
- the potential risks / advantages of your child being at school.

Please share these with your child’s class teacher by email by Tuesday 21st April. We will look at all requests using a formal risk assessment approach and will be back in touch by Tuesday 28th April. We know that circumstances at home are subject to change and we will therefore review our support offer for individual families on a weekly, and case-to-case basis.

Finally, we want to reiterate our commitment to the safety of your children, the Riverside School community and wider society and we thank you for your patience and understanding during these unprecedented times. We know that you are doing an incredible job and we are sending you all our very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher