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CEO: Mrs C Dickinson

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Families,

This is an out of the ordinary letter for us to be writing to you, but these are unusual times.

### School opening and support for certain children

We are still intending to open our schools for any children with lone key worker parents, two key worker parents in the same household, or those with certain needs. Please note that we are only able to give access to this care for those families who are specifically identified by the government. We have sent out a link for a survey about this. If you are a key worker, please complete this by **8am tomorrow** so that we can then carry out urgent planning. You will be notified whether we can accept your child and the location of the care, as soon as possible. However, we should point out that we are currently still awaiting the key worker list that Boris Johnson promised would be published today, so we hope that it is imminent.

**To clarify: if one parent is a key worker, the government expects the other parent to care for their child at home. If you are a single parent key worker, you will be able to access the support from school.**

We do appreciate that some parents who will have to look after their children may also be expected to work from home. We are sorry, but we are not able to extend our offer to you. We all need to juggle and work together at this time. If you are an employer, please could you also bear this in mind for any of your home-working employees? If your circumstances change, do contact your local school.

Our support also extends to families through our Family Support Work team. If you have not already had support from this team and feel that you would like assistance on anything, please contact them on [fsw@kite.academy](mailto:fsw@kite.academy). At the moment, all contact will be through email or on the telephone. As with everything, please remember that this process may be reviewed or changed in the future. If you find that you need support from a local food bank please contact your child's school office and they will be able to refer your request on.

We are currently looking at what will be possible for those children who are entitled to free school meals. We are waiting for Government advice about this and will contact you about this in a future letter.



## Home learning

As we have already said, your school will be sending out some learning activities to support you and your child during the school closure. This will be revised and refreshed as the time goes on.

As well as these activities or resources, we must all remember that what all our children need right now is to feel comforted and loved: to feel like it's all going to be ok. Like some adults, they may be feeling anxious. Although the idea of being off of school for a prolonged period sounds great, they are probably picturing a fun time like summer break, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

To support them, you might need to tear up your perfect schedule and go to play outside and go on walks; bake cookies and paint pictures; play board games and watch movies; do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo; start a book and read together as a family; snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.

Don't worry about their academic progress at this point. Every child is in this boat and they all will be ok. When we are back in the classroom, we will address their needs from wherever they are. Teachers are experts at this!

Over the coming weeks, you may see an increase in behaviour issues with your children. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally - it will happen. You'll see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

If we can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of all of this, your children's mental health will be more important than their academic skills. How they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during these weeks. Please bear that in mind, every single day.

Yours sincerely



Christine Dickinson  
**CEO The Kite Academy Trust**