



Blakesley Church of England Primary School

Our Vision

As a Church of England school at the heart of the community and in partnership with parents, Blakesley C of E Primary School is committed to enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential. It is a place where we learn how to love God, one another and ourselves and to serve the community. We will do this through developing a love of learning within a creative, dynamic and vibrant environment based on Christian values where everyone aspires to excellence.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I would like to say that I hope that this finds you, your families and all of your loved ones safe and well. Above all, this is the priority at this challenging time. As a school, our hearts, our care, our prayers and our support reaches out to every one of you.

I hope that you have found the contact and interaction from school supportive of your children and of yourselves. We know that many families are now facing pressures that they could never have planned for. The stresses of working from home, of changes to financial situations, of home educating children, of worrying about vulnerable loved ones are immense. We are here to help in every way, offering practical support and guidance wherever we can. I will outline these in more detail below, but please do not hesitate to contact us should you need any support. We will do all that we can. We care about you as we do our own families; in fact, we think of ourselves as the Blakesley Primary family and as such we will always be there for you.

I have just looked back over our diary of planned events for this point in the term; usually we would have been knee-deep in Easter celebrations – making Easter gardens, holding Easter egg hunts, sharing our Church Easter service with you. Whilst these activities cannot be shared collectively, I would like to take a moment for us to reflect, as we would with the children, on the Easter story and its most significant messages of hope, of God's love and care for us and of the light that will come at the end of this period of darkness. I hope that these reflections may bring some light and hope to you at this time.

As often happens in times of real difficulty, people's true goodness can shine through in the most incredible ways. I have been incredibly touched by the Christian care shown by our staff who, I believe, have gone the extra mile to reach out and offer care and support to our children and families. I cannot thank them enough for continuing to deliver the level of care that makes Blakesley so unique and precious in spite of the challenges that our current situation presents.

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In addition to the care provided by school, we have engaged with Miranda who leads the SOFEA Community Larder initiative in this area, providing essential food parcels for those who cannot get to the shops or who find themselves in a difficult situation. Miranda provides parcels of non-perishable foods to families in need. We realise that some of you may be presented with sudden and unexpected financial challenges, that you may be stuck in a period of self-isolation, or you may be challenged to access the shops. In any of these situations, whether temporary or longer term, please allow us to help by accessing support for you via the Community Larder project. All enquiries will be dealt with in absolute confidence through the school so please don't struggle, let us help if we can.

We are also conscious of the incredible anxieties and worries that our current way of living presents. I have done an awful lot of thinking about the role of schools in the last couple of weeks. It would be easy to underestimate how much children rely on the structure, routine, stimulation and interaction that school provides in 'normal times'; however, this reliance has become very apparent at the moment.

We are very mindful of the pressures on our children; some do not manage change well, many are missing their teachers and their friends. We are also very mindful of the many pressures on families. Please do be aware of caring for your children's mental health as well as for your own. Each week our staff will include some mindfulness and PE activities in their timetables, please do use these – with your children if possible. The benefits of taking time to reflect and of taking physical exercise become even more important as our world seems to shrink around us. I'm sure that you all take time to get in a good walk or take some exercise – please make sure that your children do too, the impact of this on their wellbeing will bring huge benefits (even if they moan a bit to start with!)

As a school, we have taken a conscious decision to limit the amount of learning that requires the children to use a screen. Whilst we believe the programmes that we do direct our children to provide great learning opportunities, we are trying hard to achieve a balance of tasks that do not require children to be online.

Please do be aware of the risks that using the internet poses to your children. Sadly, those who would seek to harm children will use the opportunities presented by school closure to do just this.

- Please ensure your parental controls are set (email us if you don't know how to do this – we will help).
- Please only allow your children to be online in a room where you can keep an eye on them

Our Blakesley Values: Fellowship Courage Compassion Thankfulness Wisdom

- Please keep a close eye on the sites that your child visits, especially those that allow interactions with other people.
- Please remind your children about thinking critically and never disclosing their personal details or sending photos online
- Please limit the amount of time your children spend in front of a screen, even if they tell you it is educational. Switch off regularly and limit timings.

I'm sure you know all of this, but when we're all busy, it's easy to let things slip. To me, the risks posed by being online are greater than ever for our children at this time. Please take care. Our website's Safeguarding tab has some really useful documents and advice that's easy to read and implement. I've also listed some useful websites that you may like to look at below. Please do have a look:

<https://www.blakesleyprimary.org.uk/index.php/safeguarding/online-safety>

In addition:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Over the Easter break, we will change the work that is being set for our pupils slightly to offer more creative tasks linked to the Easter theme. These will be posted on our website ready for Monday morning.

After Easter when the new term starts, we are aiming to move to setting work through the Tapestry platform which many of you will have experienced when your children were in Reception class. Details will follow on this in the coming weeks and (technology willing!) Tapestry will be ready to use for the summer term. It provides a more flexible means of communication between our teachers, our children and our families so please look out for details which will be emailed to you.

I hope that the information contained in this communication has been helpful to you. As always, if you would like to speak to us about any of the issues raised here, please do contact us, we will do our very best to help.

Please take a moment to think about our school values and to encourage your children to reflect

Our Blakesley Values: Fellowship Courage Compassion Thankfulness Wisdom

on them and how they can exercise them in their daily lives. My own son Charlie is in his first year of working for the NHS; he is on a stroke ward in Bury Hospital working with frightened and vulnerable patients many of whom are affected by the virus. I know that he is having to show great courage, great compassion, great team work and great wisdom in his role. At the age of 21 years, I never dreamt he'd have to do the work he is doing, facing fear and death and love and hope on a daily basis. I know that the values he has grown up with are giving him the strength he needs to make his small personal contribution to a much bigger fight.

Our personal values help to make us the people we are, so please encourage all of these things in your children.

Our thanks, as always, go out to all of you for your ongoing care and support for us. We send special thanks to those of you who are working hard to help others and in doing so are facing the real human costs of this situation. Our love is sent to you all – perhaps we can all show this at 8pm each Thursday night, taking time to think of a person that we know who works within the much larger system of care for which we are so grateful.

Sending our kindest thoughts and prayers to you all and wishing you all a very Happy Easter.

Be safe, be kind, take care.

Sally

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