

Bobbing Village School

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TIMU ACADEMY TRUST

Iwade School

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Dear Parent and Careers,

As we begin the most surreal Term 5, there is still a cloud of uncertainty as to when life might start returning to normal. We too are waiting eagerly for the announcement from the Government about the Return Strategy.

In the meantime, school has continued to be partially open for the key workers 106 children for the last six weeks, including through the Easter holidays. However, I can fully appreciate for the vast majority of our pupils and parents things are becoming more challenging as the weeks go by. Although it is so important that we continue to abide by the guidelines so this hideous virus is beaten and everyone's life can resume safely. Thank you for playing your part too.

You may have seen in the media the DfE have put together an online school called Oak National Academy. They have launched an online classroom with lessons in maths, English, Spanish, Geography and science. These can be accessed from the schedule or by subject. <https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom>

BBC Bitesize are offering a schedule of daily video lessons, often hosted by Famous faces for children <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> - the website has a schedule for each week, as well as video lessons by subject and year group.

The Department of Education has released a Youtube channel with daily phonics lessons, using the same phonics programme we use in school for year R-2 https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP_FbjYUP_UtldV2K_-niWw/featured

In addition, we continue to update our website www.timuacademytrust.org.uk – Covid-19 section with weekly additions.

This has been recently fine-tuned to simplify finding information:

- Supporting your children at home – contains wider information about learning at home, the home learning pack, subject specific pages (including SEN) and online access to the apps we use in school.
- Helping your child be safe online – a new section with information and lessons/discussion points about being safe online. With so much time spent online now, it is vital that children continue to learn how to be safe and what to do if something bothers them.
- Supporting your family during lockdown – links to support mental health and wellbeing, discussion points and questions to share with your family and talking to your child about Corona Virus.

Please share with us any other fantastic resources or websites your child is enjoying and we will update our links.

The 2nd set of home learning packs are currently being distributed in response to over 500 requests – ensuring that it was ready in time for distribution has been no mean feat - we have calculated a staggering 83,000 pages were needed! Firstly, the work was sourced by the teachers, staff then volunteered to come in to print and sort and photocopy all the packs then they finally were labelled, boxed up in collection order (to adhere to social distancing guidance) or even delivered by our own Bobbing postmistress Mrs Usher.

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These have also been uploaded to our website on Covid-19 – Supporting your children at home – home learning pack 2 – then choose the year group you need. These are all PDFs and so you can selectively print pages. If your child is struggling with any aspect of their pack, then do choose a different year group and try some work from that. The work is aimed at supporting their current learning rather than expecting you to teach new concepts at home.

During this strange time we do not expect you to be teaching your child full lessons, but any encouragement you can give them to read widely (or listen to stories), choosing something from their home learning pack to work on, or learning wider skills (hoovering, cooking, gardening, making bird boxes etc) are perfect.

We continue to use our Facebook pages to share regular fun challenges and other information posts such as how your child can access and use their Purple Mash email. If you are not a member, then please search for Iwade School or Bobbing Village School and ask to join. It is a closed site so you just need to be a current parent or carer to join.

We have really enjoyed seeing what your children have been up to – taking part in our challenges, sharing their adventures in the garden and on walks and showing their home learning.

For our year 6's, we fully understand that this is an incredibly difficult time, coming towards the end of their primary years in such a manner. Please be assured we will not let it go uncelebrated. We do not want our year 6 children to miss out on end of year events as it is an important part of their transition into secondary school. We are planning to host an event for the children – regardless of whether this happens in term 6, or after they have moved to secondary school. More information about this will be released once we have a better idea of when school life will resume.

As part of this we are planning to go ahead with Graduoke as we know how much the children love it – currently the company that offers this service are not contactable so again we will confirm this once we have more information.

The ordered hoodies have arrived and are safely waiting for our year 6 event. We know that some local schools have just sent them home, but receiving them and signing each others shirts is so important to the children, so this will also take place at the same time.

We have continued to contact PGL to see whether they are cancelling our trip. If we choose to cancel the trip then you would lose both your deposit and 30% of your payments, hence our waiting it out for the company to cancel and receive a full refund. They have recently cancelled all visits up to 31st May so hopefully we will have more news soon.

Many of the class teachers and their TAs are in the process of writing emails and creating class blogs which they will share with your children via Purple Mash. We have chosen this platform for its high level of safety, compliance with our safeguarding procedures and it is known to most of the children. We have shared on Facebook and via email how to access the pupil emails, but please get in touch via Office@iwade.kent.sch.uk if you don't have this.

Children from year 2 upwards can email their friends via Purple Mash. However, all emails exchanged between pupils must be approved by their class teacher or the Administrator before they arrive. This is for safeguarding reasons and to help children to be safe online.

We know that this unprecedented time is causing financial strains for some families, so please remember that if you apply for, and get accepted for free school meals then your child can then receive a £15 a week supermarket voucher from the Government scheme which may help a little towards your weekly shopping bill. This is valid only during the current crisis. It doesn't matter how long or short a time you remain eligible; your child will continue to receive the £15 voucher for each week they remain eligible. More information about applying and eligibility is on <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

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Any child who has been in receipt of free school meals (for any length of time) then can receive free trips from the school and free booking for school clubs, so you will continue to have an ongoing benefit. However, please note that this is different from YR R,1 & 2 Government Universal Free School Meals which all pupils are entitled too. We know that some families are uncomfortable about the application but would reassure you that this information remains confidential in school and children are not treated differently in any way.

Many families are sharing that lockdown is a challenge for them – for so many reasons! We have some great links and advice available on our website in the Covid-19 section.

This graphic is also useful to help us as adults



Please do contact us if we can offer any support to help you get through this strange time.

This is a difficult subject for most people, but sadly a few families are having to deal with bereavements at the moment. This is something most of us have limited experience in and never under such circumstances. Talking to children about such a sensitive subject can be very difficult, not knowing what to say or do for the best. We have recently added a new document to the supporting your family during lockdown page, if you are in the unfortunate situation of needing the advice this document is an accumulation of advice from bereavement charities with lots of links to videos and supporting resources to help.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and give my thanks to **everyone** who is helping in anyway to combat this virus. Whether it is the extremely dedicated, brave frontline NHS and carers, the range of other keyworkers who are keeping our essential provisions going, our own amazing staff (either those coming in and do their bit or those preparing things at home) or the families who are staying at home to stop the virus spreading further; **it all counts, it all matters, it all helps and it must work!**

Keep safe everyone, and we hopefully will see you in the near future.

Mrs Browning

Executive Principal
Timu Academy Trust

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