

15th January 2021

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you so much for the feedback you have been giving us about the remote learning experiences of your children; this feedback is very important to us in helping us make refinements and improvements. We have seen so much excellent work and engagement from the students across all curriculum areas which all helps to keep everyone positive and motivated.

If you have contacted us about difficulties accessing remote learning, please be assured we are working our way through these concerns and doing all we can to get an appropriate device to those in need as quickly as possible. We took delivery of some devices from the DfE last week but the number of these are in the 10s not 100s and so we are having to work our way through a priority list.

Our SECAT ICT team are also able to request an increase in mobile data for those students that are accessing their remote learning through their phones. Please see an extract from the guidance below:

Who is eligible?

You can request extra mobile data for disadvantaged children who:

- have no broadband connection at home
- cannot afford additional data

One of the following must also apply. They are children:

- in years 3 to 11 and whose face-to-face education is disrupted
- who are clinically extremely vulnerable and need to shield on current official advice (this could be from a doctor or hospital consultant)
- who live in a household that's been advised to shield because a family member is clinically extremely vulnerable
- who cannot attend school – even though theirs is open – because restrictions prevent it

Must be on:

- EE
- O2
- Sky Mobile
- SMARTY
- Tesco Mobile
- Three
- Virgin Media

We will be sending out a communication shortly to those families where our records show they meet these categories; if you do not receive this but feel you are eligible against the criteria given then please email the school office and put mobile data as the subject heading.

As a separate matter, we would also like to make you aware that we have a large stock of sanitary products on site and these can be made available for students if required. These can be collected from reception between the hours of 8.30am-3.30pm.

Looking ahead we will be running some student voice sessions so we can hear directly from our young people on their experiences of remote learning and their suggestions for improvement and we will also be asking for parental feedback via a survey.

As I said at the outset of this letter we are very grateful for the engagement of our parents and the interest you show in your child's learning; it helps immensely. If you are contacting individual staff please be aware that they will not always be able to reply immediately. On average a teacher may teach 300 different students and our year managers and academic year leaders are responsible for year groups that are over 300; this explains why your queries may not get an immediate response. Safeguarding and welfare queries will always be dealt with first.

You may already have seen news that a new lateral flow device (LFD) rapid testing site is planned to open in Shoeburyness youth centre for those who do not have symptoms of COVID-19. This test centre will open on Tuesday 19th January from 14:00 to 18:00 but will then be open 7 days a week from 08:00 to 19:00 from Wednesday 20th January by appointment only. This will be a great facility to have in our community.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy weekend

Clare Costello
Headteacher

