



Somerville Federation

Somerville Primary School and Somerville Nursery School

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Executive Headteacher – Mr M J Forber

1st May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We are truly missing seeing the children now each and every day and look forward to returning to a time without lockdown restrictions and supporting our children and your family. As we approach week 7 of the school closure and not having all of our children in school, this is the longest that the school has ever been closed in recent history, very unusual times! I trust that you continue to stay safe and hope that everyone in your family continues not to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This week we have seen truly inspiring people encouraging us to keep spirits high and to thank those key workers in our NHS. I could not write this letter without drawing upon the inspiration that is Captain Tom Moore (now Colonel) celebrating his 100th birthday and the £32 million+ he has raised for NHS charities. Well done Tom and everyone else out there raising funds and doing their bit, no matter how small to support our front line workers and carers.

Contacting the school.

We continue to check answer phone messages daily and any emails sent to the schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk are sent directly to me to respond to daily. If you have any issues at all about school, childcare, free school meals, or anything else please get in touch and rest assured that either I or another member of staff will respond to you. At times this may take longer than expected but if you have not had a response after a couple of days please call back or email. Since last week I have sent more than 400 emails to parents and carers and telephoned 19 of you. The staff and I are here to help you during this difficult time, so if you have any issues please do get in touch, you are not alone.

Childcare Provision.

We continue to offer childcare provision for vulnerable children and those children of Key Workers. This week we have averaged 22 children per day. Again I continue to thank all staff members for their commitment and dedication under these difficult circumstances and putting themselves and their families at risk to ensure that we can continue to provide this essential service of childcare.

Working from home.

We hope that you are not feeling overwhelmed supporting your child with their learning at home, whilst trying to do all of the other things at home including working from home. Remember you can only do so much and there is only so much time in the day. Please don't get stressed by the learning from home, you are not expected to be a teacher as well as a parent. Just keep doing your best in supporting your child, you can only do what you can do. If you are having any worries about working from home don't hesitate to email your child's year group teachers, each year group has their own email for instance year1@somerville.wirral.sch.uk, just replace year1 with your child's year group. F2year@somerville is the only one that differs slightly in format.

Free School Meal Vouchers.

The difficulties around free school meal vouchers continue this week and it is turning into a saga both for ordering voucher codes from my perspective and for you as parents ordering the vouchers once you have received your codes if they have not ended up in your junk email box first. If you have received error messages when trying to enter your 16 digit redemption code try and enter it on the compliments select website when it is a quieter time. I have found that anything later than 11.30pm and before 6.00am usually works. Which, just typing this into this letter sounds ridiculous but the Government

know that these issues are not supporting our schools and families. You may have even seen news reports about this today on the national news. Over the coming days I am sure their capacity to support you will increase as a consequence. I have ordered next week's voucher codes already and they should be with you from Sunday through Monday. Some top tips and important messages for parents and carers regarding free school meal vouchers. From 11th May the school business manager will be ordering vouchers for you on behalf of the school.

- Check your 'junk mail' box in case either the redemption codes or the vouchers have landed in this email inbox once you have ordered them. A number of Somerville parents have had this happen to them.
- Remember to go back online before going to the supermarket with your redemption code. You need to use your code to order your gift card or voucher before going to the supermarket.
- When writing your email address do not incorrectly type your email address as your gift card or voucher may end up in someone else's inbox for them to use.
- Since using Edenred compliments select 470 vouchers have been downloaded and used by Somerville parents, but as of last night 190 codes have not been used and still remain live.
- Some of these codes expire on 26th May 2020. Make sure you redeem yours before this date.
- I sent a text message to 20 parents this week informing them that they have not yet downloaded their vouchers from WONDE during the first three weeks of closure and to contact me so that I could send their supermarket vouchers direct to them. However only two parents got in touch.
- I also sent a text message to 32 parents informing them that they have tried to apply for free school meals online for their child but more information is needed and to send me any evidence to help their claim go through. To date I have received evidence from 5 of these parents.
- Please remember to be eligible for free school meals that your household income can't exceed £7,400 a year after tax and not including any other benefits so on a monthly basis income would need to be £616.66 or less.
- Any difficulties regarding error codes or vouchers not arriving please email Edenred direct on freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com

Please remember that if your circumstances have recently changed or you did not realise that your child was not registered for free school meals please click on this link <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral/> and apply for free school meals for your child. We will then get vouchers out to you as soon as this is possible. 8 children who have registered in the last two weeks have now had their voucher codes ordered. We now have 237 children registered and eligible for free school meals.

I feel extremely fortunate myself to have narrowly missed hospitalisation after suffering Coronavirus symptoms for the past five weeks and am now starting to recover each day with my breathing getting stronger each day. I encourage you all to continue to look after yourselves and your family during this tragic and difficult time for many.

With regards, continue to keep safe everyone and look after yourselves as well as each other.



Mr M J Forber
Executive Headteacher