



Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

# Newsletter 281

[www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk](http://www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk)



Dear Parents/Carers,

## Big thank you to parents and staff

I want to thank all parents for the great efforts you have made to support your children's learning at home during this challenging period since lock down. Juggling work from home whilst supporting your children is an enormous task. For those with more crowded accommodation or little access to outdoor spaces, it has been particularly difficult and I really appreciate all you are doing for your children.

I also want to thank all of my staff who have volunteered to come into school to look after our most vulnerable children, SEN pupils with complex needs and children of essential workers. For these staff, there has always been a greater risk of contracting Covid-19 but they have willingly volunteered and I am very grateful to them. We now have more than 30 children coming into school at some point across the week which is a larger number than in many Islington schools of twice the size and means we are now at full capacity for safe in-school provision.

We are all hoping that there is light at the end of the tunnel and all my staff are looking forward to school reopening in the coming months. But this can only be done when we feel we can keep children and staff as safe as is possible in the circumstances.

## Government plans for phased reopening of primary schools

As you will all know plans have been published for a possible phased reopening of Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 classes on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. I am now working with my Senior Leadership Team, Premises Manager, school staff, governing body, the local Education Authority and other Islington schools to risk assess whether it will be possible to open these classes. Staff will also be taking advice from professional associations and unions.

The plan and the protocols that we put in place will be reported in detail to parents as soon as they are completed and agreed. It will not be possible to maintain full social distancing amongst young children at all times, particularly in Nursery and Reception. Our aim therefore will be to reduce the risk of potential transmission and to be honest and transparent with you about the safest ways in which we feel we can re-open classes at the school.

## Half term holiday

I am conscious of how important it is for pupils, parents and my staff to have a break from 'school', so home learning will stop during half-term. We will keep school open for children currently on our in-school list on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May and Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May only. During this week we will be preparing the site for the proposed phased re-opening of school.

## School uniform

For any families thinking about school uniform this is the latest information from our uniform supplier Rough Cut Casuals:

1. From May 27<sup>th</sup> till June 2<sup>nd</sup> we will trial opening the shop for restricted hours from 12pm until 4pm
2. Depending on the customer flow and adherence to social distancing guidelines, we will then decide the possible opening for longer periods and/or revert to regular opening times, i.e. 10am till 6pm weekdays, and 10am till 2pm on Thursday and Sunday
3. Children will not be able to try any clothing, instead our colleagues will gauge the size and if they need to refund or exchange, we will be happy to do so
4. Our online shop [www.roughcutcasuals.co.uk](http://www.roughcutcasuals.co.uk) has been open and will continue to be open for any parent who prefers to buy online. If items need to be exchanged or returned, they can do so by post or can be brought to the shop.
5. All exchanges in person or by post will not be handled for a minimum of 48 hours. As a result, customers will have to leave items with us for 48 hours before returning to the shop to exchange.
6. We will request that only the parent/guardian and the child visits the shop ( i.e. 2 people) so as to reduce the number of people in the shop and ensure social distancing as far as possible
7. We will only allow up to 2 customers in the shop at any one time to maintain social distancing.

Yours sincerely,  
Mark Owen Headteacher

### Explaining Coronavirus to children

Parents might want to use this link to a free e-book which really explains Coronavirus to children. It is a free e-book that explains coronavirus in some more detail for primary school kids and there are some key questions you can ask around it.

<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/>

## Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care.

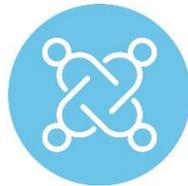
Staff, **parents** and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday

10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday



**ELIZABETH  
HOUSE**

Your local community centre

## Covid-19 crisis Food and care parcels for isolated and vulnerable residents

If you need extra support and would benefit from receiving a weekly food & care parcel,

contact Elizabeth House Community Centre on

**info@elizabeth-house.org.uk** or

**020 7690 1300**

to be added to our distribution list.

Parcels are currently delivered by local volunteers on **Wednesday** afternoon.

Elizabeth House relies on food donations from Islington Council, local supermarkets, residents and local restaurants. The content of parcels will vary depending on donations received, but generally include freshly cooked meals, dry and fresh food, toiletries and cleaning products.