



Message from Ms Drew



Welcome back to the summer term. I hope you all had a restful Easter. This is a very strange way to start the term I missing seeing you all, but of course we have to do this to keep the school community safe.

Everyone at Benthal has been busy even with the school closed. We had a play scheme here over the Easter holiday as Benthal was used as a hub school for the whole of the borough. It was open to key worker children and was very successful. Many of the children and the grownups had never been to Benthal and were very impressed with our school, especially our outdoor space. They loved the outdoor gym too, they thought it was amazing and the children of Benthal 'were really lucky to have it'.

Staff have been on a duty rota since the school closure in order to keep the school open for our key worker children and other children who are eligible. The children have been completing their home learning packs in school and I've seen lots of them do the daily Joe Wicks workout too. We have got very clear social distancing guidance in place in the classrooms, in corridors, out in the playground, even in the lunch hall!

I've been busy organising, collecting (in my car) and then handing out weekly food hampers to lots of our children and their families, including over the Easter holiday. Lots of members of staff have helped me with this too. I know the government have issued vouchers for families to use, if you think you may qualify for the voucher scheme as your circumstances have changed recently then please ensure you speak to the school office.

A very BIG announcement; class emails will be launched soon! The teachers in Year 2 and in the juniors will soon have a class email to begin using. The teachers will be able to send you online learning links; upload activities and send attachments of work to you and your families and you will be able to email back if you need any help with a task. Teachers will be using parent/carer emails to send 3 weeks' worth of home learning tasks including a new timetable. They will continue to communicate with you through Marvellous Me twice a day, to let you know which activities the children need to do. We have written a Parent/Carer guide in how teachers will use the class emails at Benthal. This will be emailed to you, so look out for it very soon. Please inform the office if you have changed your email address recently.

The children and their families in Year 1, Reception and Nursery will continue to communicate with their class teacher through Tapestry. We have also written a Parent/Carer guide in how teachers will be using Tapestry moving forward.

In addition, we have sent out a text to find out if you have a PC or laptop at home, including internet access. If you do not, then please contact the school office to let us know. We are trying to source extra laptops to ensure that everyone has access to online learning. In the meantime teachers are preparing new updated home learning packs to be collected, we will let you know when.

I have really enjoyed looking at Benthal's Twitter account and seeing all the photographs of your home learning projects that you have posted. Keep it up, it is fantastic to see. You are really 'creating irresistible learning!'

Finally, the end of April and the start of May is when the Benthal swifts arrive! These tiny birds have flown all the way from South Africa to fly above our school. They only stay for a few months before flying back to South Africa, so it's important that we look out for them. Keep looking in the sky for a black curved shape and a high pitched twitter. They fly very high in the sky so it is difficult to see them, you will probably hear them first. Take care when looking into the sky though; you don't want to look directly into the sun accidentally.

Let me know when you see or hear them, I love the fact that they come back to Benthal each year. I wonder if they know that they are on our jumpers as our school logo!

Perhaps you could draw or paint a picture of them flying above the school, and post a photograph of it on our Twitter account.

Keep strong and keep safe everyone. Have a good weekend. Ms Drew

Safeguarding Advice for Parents/carers

[NSPCC.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)



- Corona Virus: advice and support
- Online grooming of children
- Counselling on impact of Corona virus outbreak
- Children using Facebook

Safeguarding advice for Children

[Childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)



- Worried about Corona Virus?
- How are you feeling?
- Common causes of worry
- Need to talk?
- Fun activities - videos and games

Free School Meals (FSM) Eligibility

- Please apply for FSM if your circumstances have changed due to the pandemic. Making an application is straightforward and you should get a decision quickly. You can apply here <https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/content/apply-free-school-meals> .
- Please let the office know if you are not entitled to FSM but feel that you are struggling as we might be able to offer you other help such as food hampers. If this is the case, please email pa@benthal.hackney.sch.uk
- The voucher scheme with the new company is now up and running and you should have received those and will continue to do so on a weekly basis. The vouchers are only for children who are entitled to FSM and do not currently attend the school.
- Breakfast bundles for children entitled to FSM are on offer as a part of Magic Breakfast initiative.
- Hackney food hub supports vulnerable people in the borough with food and medication delivery if you are not able to leave home. Individuals can also apply for help with food by calling 020 8356 3111.

With immediate effect, eligibility for free school meals has temporarily been extended to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). This extension of eligibility will end when schools have reopened to all children.

You may be eligible for support with free school meals for a temporary period as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Please complete this form if you are in one of the following categories:

A Zambrano carer

Have the right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the ECHR

Receiving support under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 AND are subject to a NRPF condition

Apart from those receiving support under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, you must also be earning less than £7,400 per year after tax.

If you feel that this applies to you, then please fill in the form on our website and email it to the school office, on office@benthal.hackney.sch.uk. If you are unable to email it to us, then please place it in a sealed envelope and leave it in the school reception area.

Reminders

- The school office is open daily 8am-4pm (term time), please feel free to e-mail or call us if you have any questions, we are here to support you through this turbulent time.
- Please be reminded that the school is currently open for children of key workers, so if you became a key worker since 20th March and require a school space, please contact the school office. You will need to provide evidence.
- Please be reminded that if you're a key worker and your child currently attends school, you are required to pay for school services (breakfast club and play centre and dinners) as usual.
- Please try to continue paying for school services if you have an outstanding charge on your child's account so it is cleared by the time we re-open. We understand that some of you may be having difficulty with this and if that's the case please speak to the school office.
- Class Reading Books—We are offering you the opportunity to come and swap your reading books every other week. We are following government safety guidelines by disinfecting every book returned. We need to ensure the virus is not taken home on a book, this is the common sense approach.
- Free milk for all under-fives (Nursery and Reception children) will be provided from week beginning 4th May every Friday. Please collect it from the main reception office waiting area 10-12 noon. Please note that Friday 8th of May is a bank holiday so collection for this week only will be on Thursday 7th May and weekly on Fridays thereafter.

