



Ulcombe C of E, Leeds and  
Broomfield C of E, Kingswood and  
Platts Heath Primary Schools

Executive Headteacher:

Emma Hickling

Friday 16th October 2020

Dear parents,

I am writing with my usual Friday update, at the end of another busy week. You will have no doubt seen on the news this week the introduction of the tier system of medium, high and very high. Our schools and communities are currently in the medium risk, which means that we are to carry on as we are. You will have received our plan based on tiers this week, this was written before the announcement, and so is in four tiers, but would relate to low, medium, high and very high. We are currently in tier two.

### ASPIRE update

All children have returned to the full national curriculum and the staff have begun monitoring the quality of teaching in the subjects they lead. We use the monitoring approach of deep dives where we look at lessons, pupil books and talk to children and staff. All areas will be monitored before Christmas so that we are always looking to improve practice. The deep dive process is based on OFSTED practice and was useful when Ulcombe was inspected last year.

### Early Years

As you know from previous letters, the ASPIRE schools are early adopters of the new EY framework. In addition to this two of our schools Leeds and Broomfield and Ulcombe are trialling the new reception baseline. This is an assessment of each child's skills within their first few months in year R. The assessments will involve some one-to-one work with the teacher where the child may be required to count or talk about bigger and smaller. This is not a written test. The baseline will be mandatory for all schools next year so we have been given a chance to try it out this year.

### Google Schools and remote education

You will have received a letter and a policy this week regarding remote education. As explained in the letter this plan will be put into place should we go into a local lockdown or if a bubble has to isolate. During the previous lock down we didn't have the software or hardware to offer live or recorded lessons, but thanks to a DFE grant we now have access to the Google G suite which includes google classroom. I have placed an order for chrome books for each school and we are using conversion software to make use of our existing laptops as Chromebooks. Staff had their first of eight training sessions last night, and learnt about google classroom, google meet and slides. I for one am excited about all this software has to offer and the opportunities we will be able to give to the children in the future once we have received the new Chromebooks. I shall keep you updated on our progress via this letter.

### Documents from the ASPIRE governors

You will have this week received documents from Mrs Annie Allum, the ASPIRE chair of governors, they included a questionnaire regarding lockdown and the health and safety at the ASPIRE schools, I would encourage you to return this via email to any of the school offices if you can. Also sent out was an advert for vacancies we currently have on the governing body and an annual report written by Mrs Allum as Chair of Governors. Please contact Mrs Branchett in the office at Platts Heath at [office@platts-heath.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@platts-heath.kent.sch.uk) if you are interested in becoming a governor. Thank you.

### Harvest Donations

Thank you for all your harvest donations - we have been overwhelmed with your generosity. The senior staff and I will meet next week and ensure that donations are made into hampers and clothes bags and delivered to families within ASPIRE.

### Update to the DFE advice regarding PPE and children displaying symptoms

I have today received updated advice from the DFE stating that when staff care for pupils who are displaying symptoms they may also need to self-isolate. This is when a child displays symptoms in school and is cared for in an isolated space by a member of staff. The member of staff would wear PPE and try to keep at a 2m distance from the child until they are collected, as our previous risk assessment. The updated guidance states that the member of staff caring for the child may also have to self-isolate, if this occurs I would of course keep you updated once I have consulted public health England as to who needs to self-isolate, and the effect this may have on the staffing of classes etc. I will update the risk assessment in due course and send the updated version home.

### A feeling of pride.....

With one week of Term 1 to go, I don't think I have ever looked forward to a half term more. I like most of my senior staff have not had a proper break since February and am so looking forward to a week of being at home. I do, however, feel very proud of my team and of all the ASPIRE pupils for their hard work and the way they have all adapted to new ways of working. I would like to publicly express my thanks to them all and to you for your ongoing support.

As ever I can be contacted by email at [ehickling@aspirekent.org.uk](mailto:ehickling@aspirekent.org.uk) with queries and questions. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend

Kind regards,

**Emma Hickling**  
**Executive Headteacher**  
**ASPIRE Federation**