Dear Parents and Carers,

**Weekly Virtual Assembly**

I hope you are all well and managed to enjoy the bank holiday. Hopefully you will have had a chance to see the fabulous school assembly which was posted on Facebook on Friday and which will be added to the website and parent portal today. Thank you everyone for your contributions, we are planning on making this a weekly event so please do continue to share your contributions with Neil Eaves our Music Therapist, who is very skilfully creating the final films. This week’s theme is VE Day, please share your contributions via email:

eavesn@birchwoodschool.co.uk

**Additional Precautions this week at Grange Drive**

I need to update you on some additional precautions we have had to take at our Grange Drive site this week. Some of you may already be aware that sadly we have had to close Birch Wood Grange Drive this week to all students. This is because we have been informed that staff and students may have come into contact with a confirmed case of Coronavirus. Staff who have potentially been exposed to the virus are being tested today and tomorrow, we plan to be able to invite the children of key workers back in as soon as negative results are received, but we anticipate it may take a full week before we have everyone’s results back. We will get students on our rota into school sooner where this is safe and viable. We will let you know as quickly as possible if any staff test positive for the virus and what the next steps would be in this case. At present our Birch Wood Vale site at Burton Road is still open to the children of key workers and those who are identified as particularly vulnerable.

We understand this is concerning for you and we are working closely with the Department for Education, the Local Authority and Public Health England on advice about the safety of our children and staff at Birch Wood. If you or your child display any symptoms and suspect you may have the virus, please take action and self-isolate following the government advice. I am currently investigating what access there is for testing children, but understand that many of our students may struggle with a typical test centre environment. If you are concerned about your child’s health please take the usual steps and contact 111.

We take health and safety very seriously and would like to stress that our actions this week are a precaution aimed at keeping everyone safe. We believe by being very careful we are also protecting the NHS by preventing further pressures on services at this very delicate time during the pandemic. We are learning rapidly through this process and know we will be able to create the safest environment possible by developing stringent procedures around infection control.

If parents have any further questions please do make contact with me or your child’s class teacher/form tutor either through their email or the advice and support email. May I also take this opportunity to remind you about our ‘Family Listening Service’. Any Birch Wood family can contact our PSHE and Welfare Lead Julie Peattie who runs this service, contact can be made via the mobile app WhatsApp with your questions or concerns, Julie will either respond via messages or arrange a call back if you prefer. This service is available between 10 am - 4 pm Monday- Friday. We have set up a designated mobile telephone line to provide our listening and support service, which is; **07915871046.**

**Prime Minister’s Update**

Many schools and families may have questions about their child’s education after the Prime Minister’s statement last night, we will be working with the Local Authority to seek clarification on the information given to date.

At the moment, for us in school, there is no change to the guidance. We have not received any information to support us with the suggestion to start the phased reopening of some year groups. We hope to receive further information and clarity from the DfE shortly, but please be assured that when we reopen we will be 100% prepared.

In the meantime, please stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Rosalind Hopkins

Headteacher