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Dear Parents and Carers,

As we enter our fourth week of schools being 'closen' (we are not closed - we are open to vulnerable children and essential worker children) I am having more and more parents contact me concerned for their own well-being and requesting places for their children at school. Unfortunately, this is just not possible. As much as I want to help everyone, I must keep numbers low enough to keep children and staff safe within current guidelines.

However, I do want to urge you all to look after yourselves. What we are all going through is hard. Very hard. We are dealing with a pandemic, friends and family being ill, possibly dying, the fear of losing people, trying to keep up with and follow the rules, trying to home school children, trying to work from home or not being able to find work at all. This is such a difficult time for all.

As you know many of our staff are also parents and we are also struggling to home school our own children - many saying 'they just won't focus or do as they're told like they do in school!'

The key things your children need at this time are to feel safe, to feel loved and be cared for. This is essential. Reassure your children, give them hugs and cuddles, play fun games with them and try to spend some time laughing each day.

Each of you will be worrying about your children falling behind (as will our staff who are parents). We are setting the same work to complete at home as we are doing in school and the same amount as we would normally complete in a day. This is a big ask for anyone and if you have more than one child, this will be a real juggling act. Combine that with limited devices (we can help here), parents working from home or looking for work - I recognise how difficult this is.

I am not saying that completing all our online work isn't important however, I am saying you need to look after yourselves as well. Your children need you to be well.

Therefore, I wanted to set out the basic minimum expectations for you. To stop your child falling behind, do the following each week day:

- 1) **Read.** Reading will really help your child progress. Going on bug club each day shows our teachers that children are still learning and progressing
- 2) **Online maths.** If your child accesses TTRS and numbots each day, teachers can see the children are still engaging and the knowledge they learn from these programmes will help them in every area of maths
- 3) **Videos.** Watch the videos on the class pages even if your child doesn't complete to work afterwards (which of course we would encourage). There is a daily maths video and also phonics for the infants as well as other videos. Please make sure your child watches these as they will take in some of the information they see.
- 4) **Laugh.** Make time together to have fun. Play a game, tell a joke, pull funny faces - we would love to see these on dojos as well

As you know teachers are making phone calls and sending messages home to keep communication and check on how things are going as a supportive measure and help where we can. If we can see the basics above are being done - we will be calling to congratulate as well. All staff recognise how difficult everything is and want to help you and the children as much as possible.

Some parents are also thriving at this time and managing all the work set online (and some even doing extra!) - brilliant keep this up. My message for everyone is to do the best you can - look after yourselves and each other.

If you need any additional support, please email support@mendell.wirral.sch.uk
Many thanks and stay safe,

Mrs O'Neill Edwards; Head Teacher