



ASH LEA

*Working together to be
the best that we can be*

14th January 2021

Dear families,

Hope you are as well as can be through what are continuing to be difficult times.

There has been a little confusion about entitlement to school places. We have bombarded you with lots of information and letters (as have we!), so wanted to make things clear. These are the most recent government guidelines on the opening of schools.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950510/School_national_restrictions_guidance.pdf

The government slightly amended their guidance in relation to special schools within this and it is clear that all of our pupils have an entitlement to a school place, but we would of course ask you to consider whether you need this place to ensure that we are supporting the national need to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 by reducing contact and travel. This school place also needs to be requested so that we can plan for this. If you have a place, it must be used unless your child is unwell or self-isolating. Planning staffing with home and school learning is complex and we try and reduce the number of people in school where we can.

Since Monday, we have had around 50% of pupils in school and we don't envisage that this will increase vastly for a while. This is manageable with the space we have available, staff split between classroom teaching and home learning and provides a safe learning environment. The staff are being tested once a week which gives an additional layer of protection for both staff and pupils. The school's health team (led by Helen Davey) have done an outstanding job in planning and implementing this. As already mentioned, our next step will be putting pupil testing in place for those who consent and information has been sent to those for whom it is relevant (Pupils in school of secondary age). We have approached transport to offer testing for transport staff, we are unsure how this will work, but know it is the right this to do.

Our aim is that we can continue to offer a school place for all pupils who need it, in a way that is safe for both staff and pupils. If staffing numbers dropped, we would have to readdress this, but we have no plans for this and this would be in response to significant staff absence. Our school has only experienced three positive cases which is testament to our diligence as a whole school community. Some parents have requested part-time places and we would support this if it was something that would help your families and your child(ren).

We will not comment on other families' decisions to send their children into school, or to stay at home. Class teachers and senior leaders are fully aware of each family's challenges

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and we hope that we are supporting each family as best we can. These are worrying times for us all and this has impacted on all families within our school community; staff and pupils.

A reminder that the system that we use for safely sharing work from home is 'Evidence for Learning' and we strongly encourage you to use this system if you have consented to use this. We can support you to access this if you are finding it difficult. A reminder on how to add is on this link [Evidence for Learning - How to add evidence on the parent portal](#)

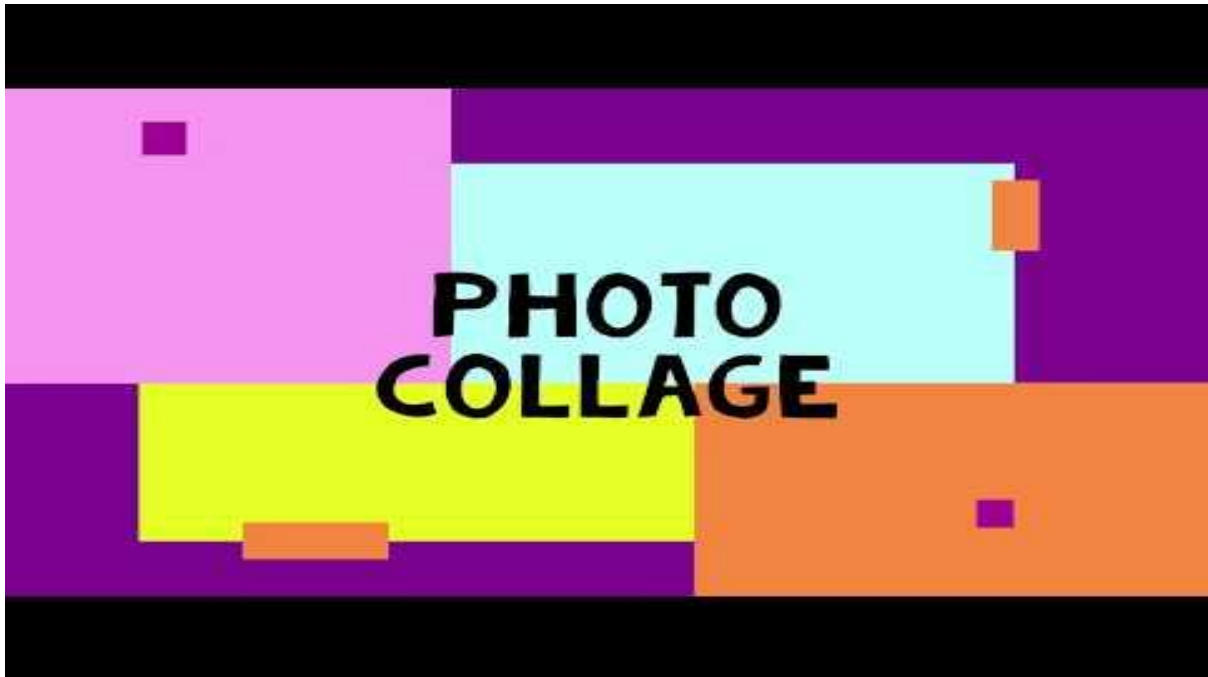


And using Picollage [Evidence for Learning - How to use Photo Collage \(app\)](#)



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Do contact us, firstly to the class teacher, or otherwise senior leaders (Me, Sandra Gell or Luke Skillington) if the provision (home or school) isn't meeting your child's needs or you are having difficulties with accessing this. We may not get it exactly right but the whole staff team are working incredibly hard to try to. We are here to support you, as always, to ensure that we are all able to be the best we can.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding

Kate Davies

Headteacher