

Teachers providing home support for schoolchildren with learning disabilities

Specialist teachers are remotely supporting children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) with their home-learning during the coronavirus lockdown.

All but two of the 26 pupils in the PMLD unit at Royal Docks Academy in Custom House are staying home due to their health conditions.

This means they're away from their four teachers and 15 support staff, who are trained to handle their personal care and behaviour, and help them to learn and achieve their potential.

Head of the PMLD unit Zama Shozi said: "It has been a very complex logistical situation.

"Our children have underlying health conditions and severe behaviour difficulties, so we have to make sure they are safe and that all of those areas are covered.

"Their parents would love them

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to continue coming to school, but they have respiratory problems and so that is not possible right now."

Teachers and staff are making regular phone calls to make sure the pupils are coping.

They're also in contact with social care and the NHS to ensure the children's needs are still being met, as well as speaking with local pharmacies to make sure they do not run out of medication.

"These are the sort of things they would be accessing while in school," she added.

Mrs Shozi believed parents will "begin to realise how capable their children are" by home-schooling them.

"They may have other children and so don't generally get to spend time with just one child

at a time," she said.

"I am hoping this time will see them realise how engaged they are and how much they are able to be a part of what is happening in their family home."

The PMLD unit is putting ideas on its website for fun, stimulating activities the children can do at home with their families.

Mrs Shozi said: "There is so much you can do with children with limited mobility.

"If there is a family member sat next to them, having a conversation with them, they will be happy.

"If you see them enjoying that, you can make it something you do every day."

Pupils attending the school, which is open for children of key workers, are taking part in functional, skills-based activities.

These include things such as football, gardening and cooking.

Goggle box



St John Ambulance volunteers receive the donation of goggles Picture: TOM BARNES

Forest Gate Community School has donated goggles used in science classes to St John Ambulance to help paramedics on the front line of the coronavirus battle stay safe.

Staff at the Forest Lane school handed over about 100 pairs of eye protectors after learning about a shortage.

School science technician Julie Burman's husband Keith, a member of St John Ambulance, made the request after learning supply chains had been

affected by increased demand during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Volunteers collected the goggles from the school at the end of March.

Julie said: "My husband asked if the school had any spare goggles they could donate to paramedics because the supply chain had been affected.

"I spoke to the headteacher, Thahmina Begum, and she was more than happy to help.

"These are brand new goggles. They are going where they are needed most."

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