

Hats off to school children learning about social distancing



Children at Little Parndon Primary Academy, in Harlow, are learning more about the social distancing measures the world has had to adopt during the coronavirus outbreak.

YOUNG children are getting to grips with measurements – by making and wearing social distancing hats. Early Years and Key Stage 1 children at Little Parndon Primary Academy, in Harlow, are learning more about the social distancing

measures the world has had to adopt during the coronavirus outbreak. Being so young, it was decided the two-metre guidance needed to be put into physical terms for the children. Steph Galliers, assistant head-teacher, said: “Pupils measured how

far two metres was, using standard and non-standard measures to give context to the distance. But, as young children naturally gravitate towards others, keeping that far away from other people was still a challenge.

“The idea came from an article about a Chinese school where parents had made the hats with their children. It seemed like a fun way to help the children to understand the distances they were being expected to observe.”

Call to extend free school meals

LABOUR councillors are calling on Harlow’s MP to push for free school meal vouchers to be made available while schools are closed for holidays.

In a letter to Robert Halfon MP, Labour councillors stressed the vouchers were a “lifeline for many families in Harlow, ensuring children do not go hungry and get a nutritious meal.”

The Conservative MP, who has represented Harlow since 2010, dismissed the letter saying he had been working on the issue “long before the letter was released”.

Signed by 20 Labour councillors, the letter said: “As MP for Harlow and chair of the education select committee, we are sure you are aware of how vital free school meals are to a lot of families in Harlow.

During these unprecedented times we are asking you to lobby for free school meal vouchers to be made available to eligible parents who currently benefit from the scheme during the formal school holidays.”

On May 13, Mr Halfon, chair of the education select committee, wrote to children’s minister Vicky Ford calling on the government to continue free school meals during school holidays.

Staffing levels too low at care home

Residents are ‘not safe from infectious illnesses’

By Lewis Berrill

UNDERSTAFFING at a care home is putting residents at ‘risk of harm’ claimed the national watchdog for health and care provision.

Weald Hall Residential Home in Thornwood, Epping, was rated ‘requires improvement’ by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following an unannounced inspection in March.

The care home – previously rated ‘good’ – was inspected after the CQC was alerted to concerns over risk and staffing.

In a report published on May 12, CQC inspectors found the care home had “failed to ensure enough numbers of suitably qualified, competent, skilled and experienced staff to meet the needs of people using the service. This placed people at risk of harm.”

Inspectors reported residents and staff were “not safe from infectious illnesses” – in the kitchen there was found to be a lack of personal protective equipment for staff.

The home was also deemed to



Weald Hall Residential Home, Epping. Photo: Google Maps

be unclear in areas. The CQC report stated: “Hoist slings had been piled on top of each other which posed an infection risk, some bathroom and areas of the service needed to be cleaner, including key touch points.

“In the main lounge some armchairs were stained, pressure cushions and height adjustable tables required deep cleaning.”

Relatives, staff and residents who spoke to inspectors told

them there were not enough staff.

One person said: “The staff do look after you, but they are also so busy and there is not enough of them. The staff here have to do two people’s work, they have to clean and then do the care work.”

The lack of staffing meant personal care needs were not being met. An individual told inspectors: “I would like more baths, but they are so short staffed I only get one once a week.”

One relative reported their family member’s hair had not been washed and was wearing unclean clothes when they visited.

In another reported incident, a resident missed a hospital appointment for a foot infection as staff had forgotten to book transport.

The report did however note the home’s manager had been recruiting new staff to cover vacancies and the current staff were also praised for their caring and kind attitudes.

People told inspectors they felt safe with the staff who supported them.

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