

26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

### Parental Update Number 5

We are just over half way through the first week of home learning and I wanted to try to give you an update on a number of issues, as well as sending our praise and admiration to all our students, who have embraced this home learning so well and who are getting up, logging in and completing their work. They have been amazing and I am receiving daily updates from staff regarding the students' progress. Staff are delighted with the 'buy in' from the vast majority— a few need to get into the rhythm of home working and we are here to help you to try to get that moving.

While the world takes stock of the strange times that we find ourselves in, we want to reassure you that we're here and doing all that we can to support our amazing school community.

Our school community is so much more than physically being in the same school building. It's keeping others in your thoughts and heart, and offering as much practical and emotional support to each other as we can. It's that feeling of being cared for and supporting each other. That feeling of belonging, of being part of a group of people who understand how you're feeling right now.

Our community will stand together, as strong as ever. We'll continue to keep in touch with you each week and daily for some of our students and families.

#### **Completion of on-line/paper work**

- Many students are panicking as soon as they look at the work. Our advice is to get them to take their time, READ carefully the instructions from staff, re READ it again and try to work independently (on their own) before they shout for you to help them or send e mails to staff saying ....'What do I have to do.....'. Our students are quite teacher dependent but learning skills of self-discipline and working on their own is a great way to prepare for adult life and education beyond age 16. Get them to TRY before they email staff. Obviously if they are struggling staff are here to help.
- Use CLASS CHARTS to check their work and ask them to use CLASS CHARTS to follow what they have to do as all the work and instructions are on there. SOME STUDENTS HAVE NOT LOGGED IN AND WE KNOW WHO THEY ARE AS WE CAN TRACK IT ALL.
- Urge students to complete work set so they don't fall behind in their studies ready for our return (whenever that is).

- Advise you children to follow sensible and appropriate email and computer use. WE still operate our E-SAFE facility and parents will hear from me if anything inappropriate starts to appear or there are safeguarding issues, we need to follow up
- Try not to stress too much to parents if your child cannot do the work, move on to something else.
- Some staff (Mr Marshall for example) are doing live on line lessons where he can support each child during their regular assigned Maths times. Make sure your child logs in at this time. We hope to move to more of this as staff get used to home working as well. It is new for us as well.
- We realise that there have been some issues with some of the online programs on which work has been set but this seems to be improving by the day. Students still need to attempt the work, if it is not confined to their normal lesson time to do their work, they could log in earlier in the day or later in the day.
- Teachers will be on line for students between 9 am and 3pm, if students e mail after this they may respond or catch up with them the next day. Beyond these hours they will be marking work and planning the next steps as they would in normal school circumstances.
- Students have also shown great support and resilience for each other – if they are stuck, they are e mailing a friend – that shows great initiative and we would ask for that to expand and be part of their plans if they are struggling.
- Get a note pad and write down all the logs in for various apps etc and take a bit of time to get organised. It reduces tension later. Also consider that sometimes these on line programmes ‘crash’ and take time to come back up. Providers are working hard to ensure the whole countries education on line systems are working.

### Further work

Staff are setting some educational game type activities and whole school competitions which we encourage all students to take part in so relieve the pressure and have a bit of fun

Staff will begin to set further work for after Easter once we re-assess how things are going over these first two weeks

### Registration and checking in with staff

Each Wednesday we ask that ALL student e mail their form tutor to check in with them and they will engage in a quick comment/conversation to check everything is ok and they are alive and kicking!

Some of our more vulnerable students and those needing extra support will get a call per day. We are taking this very seriously and if we cannot make contact via e mail, parent or student phone we have a duty to escalate this to social care and /or the police to carry out a welfare check. Please follow our procedures and advice to avoid unnecessary work for ALL the services and ourselves at this very difficult time. Not following the instructions from Government and school puts lives at risk.

### Free School Meals



All those who are in receipt of FSM should by now have received their £30 voucher to cover lunches for your children over these first two weeks. We are waiting Government advice for the next period however early indications suggest that this will be done by vouchers direct from central Government and may end up as part of family allowance. As soon as I get more detail, I will write out to you. However, I am sure you will agree that CVEA response to this was excellent and we went for vouchers rather than packed lunches as we guessed many would not come for them. Hopefully this way the £30 can help with shopping and food for lunches at home.

### Contact with School and School Staff

(Teaching, Finance, FSM issues, Admin, computer access issues)

From today we are going to try to close the building as all students are now safely accommodated at home. Staff will continue to be home working and on line between the hours of 9-3am only. If you need to make contact with the school or any member of staff either use the staff e mail address you already have or use the [enquiries@cvea.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cvea.co.uk) - this is monitored all day and your e mail address and query will be sent to the correct person to help you and they will e mail you back. Those parents (there are just a few) who we do not have e mail addresses for can use the message service on the school app. Download this if you do not have it already and use your phone. If you don't know how to do it ask a friend to help you as we have most parents now on the app. A few parents are letting us know addresses are changed – keep us up to date please as you will not get FSM vouchers etc if we do not have e mail addresses and phone numbers on our system.

In conclusion main message is how impressed I've been with how proactive the students and their parents are being. The vast majority are still taking their learning seriously and really want to do the right thing, which is really important as we have a long way to go yet. Students need to just relax and do what they can if they are struggling. Contact staff or ask for a call from your HOY if your child or yourself are getting upset or stressed.

I will write to you again next week with any further updates. Please follow the advice, as tough as it is, in this lovely weather and above all keep safe. We hope to see you all when this crisis is over.

Take care

Mrs Bridges

