

4th April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Parental Update Number 6

As we break for the Easter holidays today, I wanted to write to you with an update on a number of matters, as well as to thank you again for your continued support in these challenging times.

Home Learning and the Easter Holidays

Thank you for all your efforts over the last two weeks; balancing your own workload and ensuring that school work is being completed by all the children in your household is no easy task!

We are not asking students to complete any additional work over the Easter holiday. I have asked staff to refrain from setting any more work so that students and parents can have a break - you all have done so well. The staff have tried to set up some competitions and more light hearted tasks for you to do at home. I hope you have enjoyed them. Many thanks for all the photography entries, especially the ones for my 60th birthday, they were amazing and I was very humbled that so many students sent me birthday wishes over our virtual learning set up. Your engagement in CVEA is much appreciated.

Keeping safe

Please refer to the Safeguarding information and links to mental health services on our website for further support if you need any further guidance on how to keep healthy and safe. After Easter staff will continue to make weekly contact with most students and daily contact with those who need us more often. At any time if students or parents need anything we have a rota of senior staff who are answering the enquiries e mail. This will be available throughout the Easter holiday period.

Year 11 Examinations update

The Year 11 students and their parents will have now received the letters from Ofqual relating to the summer 2020 series of GCSE examinations. We have no details yet on Vocational courses.

Students should note that Academy staff are prohibited from discussing with students the grade they believe they were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned. We appreciate students may be concerned about their examination results and students should remember Ofqual has publically stated that: 'We want to reassure students waiting for news that we are doing everything we can to make sure they are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances.' We have received e mails from parents and students asking if Year 11 should continue to complete any further work. Whilst this may not be part of the assessment required to enable a grade to be awarded, those students moving to sixth form and college may need to keep up their subject knowledge and work ethic to cope with the return to school/college in September. There is discussion in the Ofqual letter about examinations being made available in the autumn term for those who may not receive the grades they require.

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School Closure

To minimise risk of transmission and to prevent non-essential journeys, we have been closed this week as we have had no eligible parents/carers needing this provision for their children. However, if there is a change to your circumstances and you are unable to make alternative arrangements, please email the enquiries@cvea.co.uk. We ask that all eligible parents/carers give us at least 24 hours' notice, so we can safely open the building and resource the correct number of staff required. This provision is for key worker staff, and only where no other arrangements can be made. We want to be sure we are following the Government rules of 'Staying Home', 'Staying Safe' as this is crucial for the safety of the children, staff and you at home. We have received some sad messages from parents of the death of a number of grandparents and relatives of our students. I am sure you will join me in sending our thoughts and prayers to the families at this very difficult time.

Free School Meal Update

As discussed in my last letter to you, we gave vouchers for the first two weeks to be redeemed in ASDA. The Government have now initiated the national scheme. We have registered and are ready to start this after Easter. The scheme allows parents, to get an e voucher and to nominate which supermarket you wish to purchase from. Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrison's are included.

We have set up a FSM parent email group and have worked this week to get email addresses from you all. We are short of about 9 families who, who we will continue to try and make contact with. We have e mailed out to all to 'test' the system. Please respond to us using the enquiries e mail as requested, so we can set up your account.

The voucher scheme is up and ready for us to place our first order. The system seems easy to use and gives instructions for parents on choosing their preferred supermarket. We will be paying £15 per week per student. The voucher is only valid for 1 month so we will send it out near the end of the second week of the Easter break so you will have it for the 'virtual' return to school. As I type, there has been a suggestion that FSM vouchers may be paid for the Easter break. If this is confirmed by the Government in their daily letters to me then I will ensure we get this rolled out to you asap. **MAKE SURE WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT EMAIL DETAILS.**

Cancellation of School Trips Abroad

I have personally been dealing with this issue. I am currently working with the Academy's own insurer, Zurich Municipal, to seek refunds for all parents/carers for the cancelled trips. As you can imagine insurance companies are currently awash with claims from disappointed customers who have had their holidays cancelled through no fault of their own. Our claims have been passed onto the COVID-19 claims handling team and I remain in regular contact with Zurich. When I have more information I will let you know. I fully understand the frustration you may be feeling during this process. However please be assured that we are doing all that we can in relation to this matter.

Post 16 Pathways (Year 11 students)

We have received the following updates from the local colleges with regards to applications for September 2020:

Sunderland College Bede Sixth Form and City Campus

For students who have already applied, all offers which have been made still stand. The college will be contacting every student who has applied to Sunderland College to answer any questions they may have. Interviews are now being carried out remotely by telephone.



For students who still wish to apply, the College are still accepting applications for courses starting in September. Students can apply online at www.sunderlandcollege.ac.uk/application-form/.

Gateshead College

Students who have already applied will be contacted by telephone by the admissions team. All offers of a place remain valid (subject to GCSE grades). For new applications, students can apply at www.gateshead.ac.uk. Students will then be contacted within one week by a member of the admissions team followed by a telephone interview with teaching staff.

Newcastle College

For students who have already applied, all offers of places remain valid and the college will be in contact. Applications are still open and students can apply at www.newcastlecollege.co.uk where they can also find out about the courses on offer.

We will continue to keep students and parents informed of any further updates from post 16 providers by email. Students will be receiving an online survey after Easter to complete with regards their intended destination for September. If students could please complete this so we are able to correctly direct any correspondence received from colleges, sixth forms, training providers. If any student or parent requires additional support please contact Mrs McDermott, Careers Leader (enquiries@cvea.co.uk).

Finally – thank you all once again. I have been moved by the way that students, parents and staff have come together to support one another during this difficult time. I, along with all of our school community, continue to feel indebted to the NHS and Key workers for all their work to help fight this pandemic. I know that we still have difficult times ahead but we are here to support you and your families. Please take care of yourselves, families and neighbours and stay home, stay safe and well.

Have a lovely Easter – the weather forecast is good but stay inside and keep safe.

Mrs Bridges

P.S. Here is the letter we sent out to all the students this week.



Dear All,

As we approach the Easter holiday and a welcome break for students and staff, it is important to reflect on how Castle View Enterprise Academy has managed in such challenging times.

We are all trying to adjust to what is being described as the 'new normal' as we venture into the unknown. It is new territory for staff as well as students; we are all learning as we go along. There is nothing to draw upon historically as there has never been anything comparable to this in our lifetimes. The Senior Leadership Team is continually working hard behind the scenes to ensure that we meet the needs of our staff and students. We too have had to adapt; Mrs Bridges held our weekly meeting on Zoom yesterday, as we are unable to meet in person. Mrs Bridges on the Zoom App - we are all having to learn new skills!

It became evident during our discussions how well students have responded, and how adaptable you have been to our new ways of working. You are so much better at this than us older people, who are often stuck in our ways of doing things! There have been so many good news stories from staff about CVEA students and we believe that no other schools can match what our students have achieved. Class Charts positives are at an all-time high. Mr Myers has reported that we are in the top 100 schools nationally for our work on Hegarty Maths. Miss Gaffney has been stunned by the quality of photographs, as many students and staff have entered the photography competitions. Dr Shepperson is seeing our next generation of scientists practising experiments from home. This is a time in our lives when we can learn a new skill or discover a new talent, such as juggling a toilet roll! Many of us have taken the opportunity to work on our fitness; the P.E. Department has reported that a Joe Wicks workout has become a morning ritual for many students.

Even more importantly, we are looking out for each other. It is heart-warming to hear from your Heads of Year and tutors every Wednesday, when you are asked to 'check in' so that we know you are safe. We hear lots of stories of how you are managing your work, looking out for your friends and family, and generally helping with the national effort to get through these tough times. When we haven't heard from students by 1100 on a Wednesday, you are checking up on your friends and colleagues and letting us know they are safe and well. It shows real community spirit and how a school is about people, not just a building.

Try to be relaxed about the work that you are being asked to complete and enjoy what is a different way of learning. The ability to learn more independently will stand you in good stead when we eventually return to school. Don't get stressed if you fall behind. We understand that there will be challenges with internet access, availability of laptops and iPads as they are shared amongst family members, and more generally just coping with working from home. Please speak to your teachers, tutor or Head of Year if you are encountering any difficulties. We are there for you as we would be in school.

Enjoy your Easter holiday. Use it as a time to take a break from your school work - we have instructed your teachers not to set work during the next two weeks. Relax and spend quality time with those closest to you, where you can. Hopefully we will all be back together in school very soon.

Take care and stay safe.

The Senior Leadership Team

Castle View Enterprise Academy

