

3rd April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Update letter for families – 3rd April

I hope that you are all coping with the current situation as well as possible. Practical and positive strategies, such as those we are outlining to you in this week's letter, are going to be vital during this period. However, I am conscious that for many of us life is difficult and the news worrying. Our communities and our resilience are certainly being tested; the good news is that they are proving themselves to be strong.

I think we all miss the continuity and ordinariness of school life. I know for some of you it will be hard to motivate your children, just as it will be hard for them to be denied their usual routines and friendship groups. Many of us are learning quickly about the ways in which modern technology can keep us connected and are grateful for the opportunities it provides to stay connected and entertained.

If I may offer some advice it would be to aim to be as gentle and kind as possible, both to ourselves and those around us. Now is not the time for high expectations and targets, but for kind aspirations and understanding. Giving each other space when it is needed, including our children, and accepting that there will be times when the pressure of a 'lockdown' will be difficult for everyone is important.

Included with this letter are some updates and useful suggestions to keep you informed and stimulated over the next couple of weeks.

Remote/online learning - I hope that you are finding your way with this process. It is less than ideal, but there are some great initiatives and success stories emerging.

Students will be able to access and continue with the activities teachers have set for them over the Easter period, but there will be more limited contact from teachers over the next two weeks and families should not expect new activities to be set over what would have been the Easter holidays.

Attached to this letter is an information sheet with helpful advice and guidance around managing remote learning during this time. We hope that you find it useful. We are very keen that students maintain progress towards their PLEDGES and have suggested some ways they can do this.

It has been lovely to see examples of the work and activities students have been doing shared on TEAMS and emailed to teachers. I hope that you will have seen some of this on our social media channels. Please keep this coming in!

We know that some students have adapted to this type of learning better than others. Although we cannot monitor every aspect of students' engagement with their learning while we are closed, where it appears that there has been no engagement so far, we will be making contact in the coming days.

Key Worker Childcare Provision in school over Easter - Thank you to those staff who have been in supervising students over the last two weeks. Numbers accessing the provision remain very low, but we are keen to ensure that parents who are eligible and need this provision to attend key roles take up the offer if it is required.

We have worked with the Local Authority to develop robust plans that will enable key workers to have trusted childcare support during the Easter period and beyond. You will find further information about the ‘response hubs’ set up by the local authority at the end of this letter. I have been overwhelmed by the fantastic response from our staff to opening the school over the Easter period, including the days previously known as Bank Holidays. May I ask that anyone seeking to access this provision registers their need on the [survey linked here](#).

If you have any questions about the provision that are not answered through the link above, please contact worried@elycollege.co.uk

Transport - From 20th April there will be two services running to bring eligible children to the college for our childcare provision. Both will be small minibus-type vehicles. This service will not run during what would have been the Easter holidays.

Route A: Soham & Fordham to Ely College	Route B: Littleport, Pymoor & Little Downham to Ely College
Monday to Friday during term time	Monday to Friday during term time
0740hrs - Soham – Townsend/Northfield 0748hrs - Fordham – Collins Hill 0754hrs - Isleham – Pound Lane Bus Shelter 0806hrs - Prickwillow – 4 Mile End 0808hrs - Prickwillow – Kingdon Ave 0811hrs - Queen Adelaide – Bus Shelter 0815hrs - Ely College	0745hrs - Hale Fen – 21 Hale Fen 0755hrs - Littleport – Crescent 0757hrs - Littleport - Crown Lane 0802hrs - Littleport – Wisbech Road – Butchers Hill Farm 0810hrs - Pymoor – Corner 0816hrs - Little Downham – Cannon Street 0820hrs - Ely College
A return service, covering the route in the reverse order will be offered from the College on conclusion of the day’s activities, departing between 3:00pm and 3:30pm.	A return service, covering the route in the reverse order will be offered from the College on conclusion of the day’s activities, departing between 3:00pm and 3:30pm.

Summer exams and Year 11 students - This morning the government released an important update on arrangements for awarding grades and qualifications to students due to sit exams this summer. The details [can be read here](#), and a letter to students [can be read here](#). Here in school we will be digesting the implications and preparing to submit the information that is required to award grades in line with this guidance. Please do not contact us to discuss individual grades as we will not be able to provide information about this process at this time.

In the meantime, many Year 11 students are beginning to think about their studies from September. Some of the sixth form providers have been in contact with prospective students with information, and we at Bishop Laney Sixth Form will be writing to all our applicants next week to update you on arrangements.

In the meantime, we have added a range of tasks, research topics and suggested reading/resources for each of our courses [on our website here](#). We urge any students planning to come to Bishop Laney Sixth Form, or even those who may go elsewhere, to take a look and begin to plan/read ahead ready to hit the ground running in September. There are also tasks and resources in most subjects on Show My Homework for those Year 11 students who would like to continue with their studies, maintain their subject knowledge and/or prepare for a possible exam entry in the Autumn.

Free School Meals entitlement - Those families who are eligible for Free School Meals should, by now, have received their vouchers or been contacted about how to access funds to help with the cost of food during this time. If you have not received any information, or if your situation has changed and you think you may have become eligible very recently, please contact finance@cmatrust.net or worried@elycollege.co.uk for advice.

Please continue to take good care of yourselves.

Yours faithfully



Richard Spencer
Principal

Cambridgeshire Local Authority COVID-19 Coordination Hubs

In these very challenging times, all schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are working closely with colleagues in Local Authorities to ensure families that are vulnerable or need additional support receive the help they need.

A network of COVID-19 Coordination and Response Hubs have been established, comprising a countywide hub and local hubs led by District/City Councils. The hubs are focussed on providing local support, coordinating community led initiatives, supporting residents, and responding to individual offers of help or requests for support including access to food banks.

The contact detail for our local hub can be found here –

East Cambridgeshire: www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/coronavirus-community-support
Monday - Thursday 08:45-17:00 and 08:45-16:30 on Fridays / covid19@eastcambs.gov.uk /
01353 665555.