Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey, Cambridge, CB24 4RS
01954 234438
info@cmatrust.co.uk
www.cmatrust.co.uk

1st May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Update letter for families – 1st May

I hope that this week's letter finds you all well and coping. Although the weather has been less glorious, there are positives to be found in the reduction in infections and associated deaths we are seeing. Staying at home and protecting the NHS is clearly having an impact, and it is encouraging to see the national discussion begin to turn to how we should plan for a return to a more 'normal' way of living.

Although we are not yet able to plan for a return to school, we have now passed the milestone of having been closed (for most!) for twenty school days. This represents about 10% of a school year. Across our family of schools, we have been planning for how to ensure that online learning activities are appropriate and maintain your child's progress. We have taken feedback from lots of you about what is working well and what could be improved. Thank you for this, it has been very helpful and has informed some of what we are shaping for the days and weeks ahead.

We absolutely understand how difficult home learning can be (many of us are doing it ourselves). We really want our students to attempt the learning activities set and engage with their classes and teachers through Microsoft TEAMS, but we also know that this isn't always easy. We will not be punishing those students who are struggling, or who don't complete the work set. Teachers or tutors will have contacted students by the end of this week to find out how you are getting on – not to check up on you, but to encourage you and discuss any barriers you face. I hope these discussions have been useful; you can expect such contact to continue over this period of closure and throughout what may well be a phased return.

So far, the learning activities we have set have been mostly 'asynchronous' - meaning work is left for students to complete when they choose. Over the coming weeks, we will begin to schedule some occasional 'live' sessions over Microsoft TEAMS in some subjects and for some year groups. This may be to provide an opportunity for discussion between the class, to enable the teacher to model or explain new content, or to provide feedback. Students will be invited to join such sessions through TEAMS. Equally, it may become more common for teachers to leave recorded clips of them talking through a presentation or modelling a concept. All of this will help us introduce new curriculum content and maintain those essential links between the students and their teachers.

Childcare Provision for the children of key workers and vulnerable students

Although next Friday (8th May) is a designated Bank Holiday, our childcare provision will remain open for children of key workers. You will need to book your place, as usual, via the link to access provision on this day and/or future days. Register your need on the survey linked here.

The guidance around eligibility of places for the children and key workers, as well as those students who may be deemed as 'vulnerable' can be read here.

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

Transport

There are currently two services running to bring eligible children to the college for our childcare provision. Both will be small minibus-type vehicles operated by **Lords Travel**.

Route A: Soham & Fordham to Ely College Monday to Friday during term time	Route B: Littleport, Pymoor & Little Downham to Ely College 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.

Parents' evenings and reports

Please note that we still intend to send home progress reports to parents of students in Years 7 and 9. Year 7 reports will be sent home during the week commencing 1st June, and Year 9 reports will go home the week commencing 15th June.

We are currently exploring the viability of parents' evenings for the remainder of the academic year. The nature and scheduling of consultations will depend upon when school re-opens and what restrictions may be in place at that time. Online solutions are also being explored. Details will follow in the coming weeks.

VE Day Anniversary – 8th May

Friday 8th May is a designated Bank Holiday to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Learning activities will still be available for students to complete should they wish, but we know that many families will want to mark this important milestone. We will ask that teachers do not contact families on the day. I know that there are a number of related activities planned in some subject areas to mark the day.

Online adult learning platform to develop workplace skills

A new online learning platform to help develop workplace skills while people are staying at home was launched this week. The new platform gives adults access to free digital and numeracy courses to help build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects. I hope this is of interest to some families.

Learn Together Cambridgeshire and Dyslexia-friendly reading lists

Those of you seeking additional resources or ideas may find this website from Learn Together Cambridgeshire a useful compendium of some of the resources available to support wider home learning. Students with dyslexia may also find some helpful dyslexia-friendly reading suggestions at this website.

Year 11 'Hoodies'

Some students and families have asked about the 'Hoodies' they have ordered. Please note that once they have been delivered and checked we will communicate the best way to safely arrange their collection.

Once again, for those of you who are finding this time difficult, we have a range of advice and contacts for support n our website under the tab 'Feeling worried or anxious?'.

Please continue to take good care of yourselves.

Yours faithfully

Richard Spencer
Principal

If home isn't safe, support is available

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, you can get help:

Cambridge Women's Aid (City, East, South Cambridgeshire): 01223 361214
Refuge (Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough): 07787 255821
National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247
Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327
LGBT Helpline: 0800 999 5428

In an emergency call 999

For more information visit www.cambsdasv.org.uk

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