

19th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Update letter for families – 19th June

I hope that this letter finds you all well and coping as well as possible with the current restrictions to life.

Those of you who follow the news closely will have seen that the footballer Marcus Rashford ‘scored’ (apologies) a great success this week in lobbying the government to fund free school meals over the summer holidays. You will also have seen today’s announcement that extra funds are to be released to support catch-up priorities in schools in the new academic year. I welcome both these announcements, and we will inform you as soon as we have more details around what arrangements in both these areas will look like for Ely College.

I hope that you all enjoyed the [presentation/celebration of student achievements](#) that we sent out last week. We aim to send out another edition at the end of next week. I’m pleased that we’ve also been able to celebrate the work of students and staff in a lovely feature published in the Ely Standard today. You can [read my article here](#).

Wider opening of college for Year 10 and Year 12 students

This week we welcomed a small number of Year 10 and 12 students back into college for face to face teaching under strict social distancing conditions. I’m pleased to say that, so far, this has gone very well, and that staff and students have adapted well to the changes and procedures we have needed to bring in to keep everyone safe. These include strict hygiene and cleaning routines, two-metre social distancing at all times, and staggered timings of the college day to minimise contact.

Thank you to those families who have sent students back to college this week. Please can I emphasise that once students are on site for the day, they must remain in college, unless for a scheduled appointment.

At present we are not allowed to have more than 25% of Year 10 or 12 in the building on any one day, and we are still unable to welcome other year groups, or the transitioning Year 6 students, into college. While this is frustrating, it is important that we approach wider opening with safety as the uppermost concern, and that we ensure the quality of our remote/virtual teaching and learning remains a top priority.



Transition Matters – Year 6 and Year 11

Our Year 6 parents have received various updates in recent weeks. Next week, we are excited to share details of the tutor groups they will be joining, and we will be sending some exciting summer activities for them to engage in. You can find all the [relevant information on our website](#), including links to a filmed tour of the college and Mrs Goodey's presentation.

Year 11 students should have received dates to come and collect their leavers' hoodies from the college, and a number have engaged in the Eton X online courses that we have signed up to. Unfortunately, it is still not possible to update families on any future 'Prom' arrangements. As soon as it becomes possible to confidently plan for future dates, we will be in touch!

Summer preparatory work for students who are joining us at Bishop Laney Sixth Form can be found on our website at www.bishoplaney.org where we will shortly also be providing details about results day and enrolment, as well as sending this out to applicants directly. If anyone is unsure of their plans for September, the Bishop Laney team are available now and through the summer to help; please just email us: admissions@bishoplaney.org or call and leave a message if we're not around on 01353 652818.

Free School Meals entitlement

The voucher system for Free School Meal entitlement remains in place for eligible families. We are pleased that the government have now committed to funding Free School Meal vouchers over the summer holidays.

If your financial circumstances have been affected by the COVID 19 crisis you could now be entitled to Benefit Related Free School Meals. The Covid19 crisis has also highlighted the difference between Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) and Benefit Related Free School Meals (FSM).

The government can only offer help to those who are in receipt of Benefit Related Free School Meals so we encourage applications from all year groups.

To find out if you are eligible please fill out our simple online application form at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals where you will receive an instant response as to your eligibility status. If you are eligible for FSM your child's school will be informed within 3 days.

FSM criteria:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (unless you're also entitled to Working Tax Credit, and earn no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop receiving Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)

If you have any queries regarding this information, please call the Education Welfare Benefits team on 01223 703200 or email ewb.fsm@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Or look at the website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Alternatively, you may prefer you can speak with CMAT Trust staff via freeschoolmeals@cmatrust.net or worried@elycollege.co.uk for further advice or clarity. We are always happy to help.

Childcare Provision for the children of key workers and vulnerable students

Our childcare provision continues but please be reminded that we are no longer able to provide a free lunch to students attending this provision. Parents need to pay for their child's lunch as usual, or ensure your child has a packed lunch. Those eligible for Free School Meals will receive their lunch free. Please continue to register your needs and book places, as usual, via the link to access provision. 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](#). If you have any questions about the provision that are not answered through the link above, please contact worried@elycollege.co.uk

Transport

Now that travel arrangements incorporate key worker students as well as Year 10 and 12 students the Local Authority are issuing weekly timetables. Please always refer to our school website for the most up to date information about bus services: [click here](#)

Buses will be operated by **Lords Travel and Greys of Ely**.

If you 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?'](#). We are here to help you.

Please continue to take good care of yourselves.

Yours faithfully



Richard Spencer
Principal