

26th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Update letter for families – 26th June

I hope that you've all managed to 'stay cool' this week in the heat and through a busy period of news and announcements. We were pleased to hear that the government intends to ensure that all students will return to school in September, and look forward to clarification around what restrictions, if any, may be required to enable that to happen. It was also pleasing to hear that additional funding has been released to support a national investment in 'catch-up' strategies. Again, we await more detail on how these funds will be made available and what they will allow us to plan for Ely College students in the next academic year.

It is wonderful to hear about the many achievements of our students who remain working from home. We've compiled some examples of beautiful work and 'shout-outs' from teachers to students who are achieving great things during this period in this week's 'Staying Together' presentation. Congratulations and thanks to students and staff who took part in the virtual 'maths challenge' and who have entered the 'CMAT's Got Talent' competition. I also know many students and families are gearing up and training for the 'Virtual Dorset Walk' and wish you all the very best of luck.

Wider opening of college for Year 10 and Year 12 students

Some face to face teaching for Years 12 and 10 has continued this week. My thanks to all staff and parents who have supported this process. It is taking place under strict social-distancing measures, and with a limit of just 25% of each year group able to attend on any one day. It is providing students with valuable contact with their teachers in these last weeks of the academic year.

Reporting

We have carefully considered how to report home on students' progress with remote and online learning so far. We know that it is far from a level playing field in terms of how easy it has been for students and families to access work during this period. However, many parents and carers would welcome feedback and guidance from teachers on the extent to which students have engaged successfully with their learning so far. With that in mind, all families in Years 7-10 will receive a report on engagement from each subject area in the week commencing 6th July. This is intended to give you time to discuss the implications with your child, as well as help us identify where the priorities for 'catch-up' and support may lie in the new academic year.

Online Parents' Evening for Year 7

Year 7 parents will recall that we had to cancel parents' evening in March as the Covid-19 crisis emerged. We have made available the dates of 9th and 10th July 2020 for you to hold a parent consultation with your child's Tutor. You will be able to reflect on the year that has passed alongside any relevant information in the reports coming home soon. Full information will be sent home shortly enabling you to log on and book a convenient timeslot to discuss your child's progress and next steps in preparation for Year 8.

Year 6 Transition

Year 6 students will have learned this week which tutor group they will be joining. We intend to provide you all with the opportunity to join a meeting with your tutor and some of the tutor group later in the next few weeks. This provides an opportunity for you to 'virtually' meet your child's Tutor, share any information with us and ask questions. You will shortly receive information about how to logon and book your timeslot for this event, so please keep an eye out for this. Also, please don't forget to watch [Mrs Goodey's latest video](#) with updates and summer challenges for students joining us in September!

Year 8 Guided Choices

Next week Year 8 students will receive confirmation of the subjects they will be studying next year. We are pleased that we've been able to deliver the vast majority of choices that students requested. My thanks to families for their patience with this process.

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

Transport remains available for key worker students as well as Year 10 and 12 students. The Local Authority issue weekly timetables - please refer to our school website for the most up to date information about bus services, or [click here](#)

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

Finally, remember we are here for you - if you are finding this time difficult, we have a range of advice and contacts for support on our website under the tab ['Feeling worried or anxious?'](#).

Take good care of yourselves.

Yours faithfully



Richard Spencer
Principal