

1 April 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you are all safe and well. I would just like to thank you again for all your support over the last two weeks. It has certainly been very strange being at school with no students. I don't think I ever thought that at any point in my career I would be leading a virtual school!

I would like to pay tribute to the work of all of our staff and students, particularly over the last two weeks. Before we moved to school closure, we embarked upon a process of rapid transition to ensure we were as ready as possible to deliver a high quality home-learning package. Our aim as a school was to provide an education at home which was second to none so that none of our children will be disadvantaged when they do return to school.

We are, of course, still learning but I would like to take this opportunity to thank you as parents for supporting us so well with home learning. I have been so delighted to read your many positive reflections on how well this has gone. Thank you to all of you who have emailed in - this has been such a boost to our staff over a really testing time for us all.

Please note that there will be no new lessons uploaded over the Easter holiday, but subjects will be setting some "homework" tasks for your child to complete. New lessons will be put on the website from Monday 27th April. This delay will give students an extra few days after the Easter holiday to catch up on some lessons if they need to. It has been a challenge for all of us to adapt to online learning and it is not always possible for your child to follow a daily timetable each day exactly, don't worry about this! Your child can be a bit flexible in how they get the lessons done. We understand that teachers, who are looking after their own children at home, need to be given a flexible approach to working and we equally understand the need to allow this for students. For example, it really doesn't matter if your child completes their Maths lesson between 4pm-5pm rather than in the morning when the lesson would have actually taken place. The key thing is that the work from the lesson is completed that day at some point.

If your child is up to date with their lessons and would like some things to look at over Easter, here are some websites which are excellent:

<https://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/learning-activities/>

Activities on a range of interesting topics for children from a top university – never too young to make a start!

<https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/competitions/KS3-4>

Short writing competitions – could your child be the next big author?

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

Something for art lovers – just because we are stuck inside doesn't mean we can't visit these fantastic museums remotely!

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NationalGeographic> https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXVCgDuD_QCkI7gTKU7-tpg

Amazing short clips from places and events all around the world, and there is a version especially for children too!

I am very mindful that the school community has lived online for the last two weeks and that this may continue for some time. It is almost certain that we will have to continue with remote learning after the Easter holidays and we are currently planning the next phase of your children's education, to build on the success of the last two weeks. We will reflect on what has gone well with online lessons and seek to modify as well as improve the experience for your child over time and offer an enhanced experience for your children. Alongside this we will be keeping a careful eye on the pastoral welfare and mental health of all our students as far as we are able. I do hope that you have had an opportunity to look at some of the advice and guidance from the government and recognised charities that was sent out about Mental Health in Mondays letter. Please do ensure that your child takes regular breaks from their screen.

Easter Childcare Provision for Key Workers – A Reminder

The health and wellbeing of our school community and support for all parents employed as key workers is at the very centre of our collective efforts and attention. We will continue to support parents in these frontline roles where this is required. Indeed, as Principal I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all of our parents that are currently undertaking frontline key worker roles. I have the greatest admiration, appreciation and respect for the work that you are doing at this testing time and I know my colleagues here at the school would echo this. Indeed, you may have seen a lovely story in the Ipswich Star yesterday about the food boxes that we donated to NHS staff at Ipswich Hospital. It was a small gesture but anything that can make a positive difference at this time is most certainly worth it. You can read the article in the link below:

<https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/copleston-high-school-donates-food-to-ipswich-hospital-nurses-1-6586213>

As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic we have, as you will be aware, been asked to continue to provide child care over the Easter Holidays. It is extremely important that we keep our Key Workers in their place of work and as such we will be open over the Easter Break including bank holidays. Please note that, as outlined by the government, childcare will only be provided where it is an absolute necessity using the following government principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.

If as a Key Worker you have no other options available we will be more than happy to look after your child here at Copleston. **On Monday I sent out a form for Key Worker parents to complete asking which days childcare provision would be needed over the Easter Break. I have included the form at the end of this letter again and I would ask that you complete this by no later than Thursday April 2nd at 10am so that we can plan for each day over the Easter Break.**

These are unusual times and we wish all key workers the very best in their endeavours to support the community.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy and healthy Easter, when it arrives. My best wishes and thoughts are with you all and with the brave frontline workers who will be the ones trying to keep us safe, ensure the country functions, provide food and ultimately those inspirational healthcare workers that we will rely on to look after our community.

Yours Sincerely

Mr AB Green (Principal)