



Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you well after the Easter break and that you, your son or daughter and wider family are safe and healthy. Despite the fact that most children are having to remain at home during this period of school closure, I thought it timely at the start of this new term to write to you with various updates.

### **Children of key workers, those with EHCPs and those deemed vulnerable**

In school provision on the middle school site continues to be available for these groups of children, where required. The routines established in the first two weeks are now well established, with a skeletal staff supervising each day on a rota basis. Thank you to parents and carers of the children concerned for the good communication we have had regarding arrangements and requirements.

### **Learning at home**

Teachers will be continuing with the approach adopted in the period before Easter, which was outlined in the letter to you from Mr Watters sent at that time, which you can find [here](#). Resources are being updated regularly, with more activities linked to practical subjects such as art and music intended. Mr Watters will write to you later this week with more details.

By and large, we are trying to stick to the in-school curriculum as best we can so that pupils can be well placed on their return to school, whenever that might be. There are many resources out there for parents, carers and their children – a significantly enhanced BBC Bitesize portal being the latest to be announced. These can be helpful, but can also be overwhelming. Our intention is that the resources we provide will be clear, helpful and sufficient, but let us know if not.

Having reviewed the extent of pupil engagement with the resources provided over the initial period of lockdown, most have worked well in a measured, sensible and conscientious way. However, some have not engaged very much at all and we intend to bring this to their parents and carers' attention. I am mindful that there are a range of potential issues facing families at the moment and therefore we need to be careful not to create undue pressure. However, we have a duty to ensure that parents and carers are aware if work is not being undertaken and there is a risk of their child falling behind their peers. Mr Watters will contact you in due course should this be needed.

### **Guidance for parents and carers from the government**

Given the continuation of the current lockdown, yesterday the Government provided some additional support and guidance for parents and carers, which you can find [here](#). Specific guidance for those of you with children in the primary phase can be found [here](#), and for those with children with additional needs can be found [here](#).

The Government has also been updating the FAQs for parents and carers, which include links to resources to support the wellbeing and mental health of young people, recognising that such a drastic change in their lives has the potential to be detrimental. These can be found [here](#).

### **Free school meals update**

For the first two weeks of school closure, we provided all families entitled to free school meals with a gift card to be used at Co-operative supermarkets. A government-led national scheme was then brought in from 6<sup>th</sup> April. This enabled us to issue parents of children entitled to free school meals an eCode that they could exchange for an eGiftcard for their preferred supermarket. The order for the vouchers for week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> April was placed last week and we are now waiting for the eCodes to be sent to parents by Edenred, the company responsible for the system. These should be received soon. We are aware that some parents and carers experienced difficulties over Easter, which we are currently investigating. We will be in touch should this apply to you.

Please note that these vouchers are only being sent to parents and carers whose children aren't currently attending school – children in school will continue to receive free meals each day.

**NB: Should your financial circumstances have changed recently and you think your child may be eligible for free school meals, please do apply so that your child and the school can benefit from your entitlement. For information on eligibility criteria and the process of applying, please see [here](#) and [here](#).**

### **Returning to school**

You may be aware that there has been a lot of speculation in the media about when schools will re-open, with some reports suggesting as soon as three weeks' time. In response to this, the DfE tweeted late on Saturday night that "No decision has been made on a timetable for re-opening schools. Schools remain closed until further notice, except for children of critical workers and the most vulnerable children. Schools will only re-open when the scientific advice indicates it is the right time to do so." This was followed by more information from Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, in Sunday's government briefing. He detailed five tests that the country would need to meet before schools could get "back to normal". You can find these [here](#).

The Secretary of State was clear that we can think about getting more children into schools and colleges again only when the country has met these five essential points. He committed to working with the sector to consider how best to reopen schools when the time comes. I shall write to you as and when the situation becomes clearer.

I shall leave it at this for now other than to send all good wishes to you, your child and wider family and to thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Mr G Atkins  
Executive Headteacher