



THE ECCLESBOURNE SCHOOL

'Learning Together For The Future'

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Wednesday 10 February 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Return to School Update

As we approach the half term break, I am writing to you to set out some of the preparations we are making for next half term. The prime minister has said a firm decision about students returning to school from Monday 8 March would be announced on Monday 22 February. The government propose to set out a “gradual and phased approach towards easing restrictions in a sustainable way. The first sign of normality starting to return should be pupils going back to their classrooms.” While there are still no firm guarantees, it is sensible now to look ahead. We will keep you informed when we know more and will be in touch again on 22 February.

Parents' Evenings

In the interests of safety, parents' evenings this year will be managed remotely. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, we are unable to hold parents' evenings in person in school. Instead, we are using 'SchoolCloud', which is an online system for both booking and conducting virtual appointments. 'SchoolCloud' allows you to schedule your appointments with teachers. On the evening itself, the five-minute appointments will be conducted via the same system. The meetings can be held via a mobile phone so do not worry if you do not have direct access to a laptop/PC.

There are three parents' evenings next half term.

Year 11 Parents' Evening 18 March

Year 12 Parents' Evening 24 March

Year 13 Parents' Evening 31 March

Bookings for all of the above evenings will open at 9am on Monday 1st March. For more information on how to book and attend the appointments please see the guide on our website.

<https://www.ecclesbourne.derbyshire.sch.uk/parents/parents-evenings-systemschoolcloud>

Year 11 and 13 Students

The Ofqual consultation on grade awarding closed on 29 January and we expect to hear by the end of this month the precise details of the provision that will be made for the awarding of GCSE, A Level and BTEC grades this summer. We will keep you informed as we know more. However, we do know that the government want grades this year to be based on teachers' assessment and that there will be no Ofqual algorithm in this year's grade awarding. It also looks likely that schools will be able to draw on a wide range of evidence to support their judgement, so that they can make a holistic assessment of all your work throughout the course. No single test or assessment will determine the grade award. Equally no single test or assessment will be a limiting factor on your final grade.

For Year 11 and 13 students we want to emphasise once more the importance of staying focused and completing the work you are set so that you are fully prepared for your next steps. Students should continue to prepare for scheduled mocks and follow teachers' directions about the work you need to submit for assessment. Should students return to school on 8 March, the Year 11 and 13 mock exam period will be Monday 22 March to Thursday 1 April. Timetables will be updated on the school website in the Examinations section this week. Once again, be reassured that your teachers will continue to do all they can to make sure you are fully prepared to achieve your potential and will provide you with the detailed information you need to help you prepare. You are doing a fantastic job of engaging with remote learning, please keep it up. It will all be worth it in the end.

Free School Meals and February Half Term Holiday

The government have directed that schools will be closed to all students for February half term holiday. Term ends on Friday 12 February and the new term begins on Monday 22 February. School will continue to be open from Monday 22 February for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. We have made arrangements for parents of students entitled to free school meals to receive advance payment of vouchers to the value of a £15 per week up to and including February half term holiday. The Department for Education have advised schools that these payments should continue up to Friday 5 March.

Coronavirus Testing

Coronavirus testing using the rapid lateral flow test is available to staff and those students attending critical worker provision and we expect to be asked to provide this for all students when they return to school. Thank you to parents who have logged on to ParentPay to provide parental consent. If you have not yet done so it would be very helpful to us in our planning for the return of students to school if you could do so at your earliest convenience.

As always, please do get in touch with us here at school if you need any further information or support.

Best wishes and stay safe,



James McNamara

Head Teacher