



# THE ECCLESBOURNE SCHOOL

'Learning Together For The Future'

Head Teacher  
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Wednesday 27 January, 2021

Dear parents and carers,

## Return to School Update

The prime minister has confirmed today that he hopes to begin reopening England's schools from Monday 8 March, with the date to be confirmed next month. The prime minister said a firm decision would be taken in the week of 22 February, after the spring half-term – the date by which it was originally hoped schools would reopen. By then the government would have a clearer picture of how vaccines are helping to contain transmission of the virus and cut hospital admissions. He said the 8 March date was based on the thinking that if the NHS is successful in vaccinating the four most vulnerable groups by 15 February, these people will have had three weeks to develop immunity. In the week of 22 February the government propose to set out a "gradual and phased approach towards easing the 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, the school welcomes the priority given to education in the statement, which provides a basis on which we can plan for students returning to school. We will keep you informed when we know more.

## Remote Learning

We are so proud and impressed with the way our students and staff are embracing remote learning and would like to thank parents and carers for the support you are providing the children. Your feedback on provision last week was very helpful and we are working through your responses carefully. We will write to you again shortly and summarise the key findings and any further improvements we will be making. You have been overwhelmingly supportive of the work teachers are doing and especially appreciative of the efforts being made to bring the classroom home via Teams, recorded lessons and feedback. 80% of respondents felt that the amount of work provided was about right, with most of the remainder feeling there may be a little too much. We will continue to work hard to get the balance right. Many responses highlighted the importance of the laptops provided by school and we are now nearing 900 issued, of which 32 were provided by the government's laptop scheme. We were able to provide further support to those who responded to the offer in our last letter. If you did not get in touch then and do require help to enable your child to access work set remotely, please contact school via email, addressing your question/request to Mr A Hardy – Director of ICT & Data. [remotelearning@ecclesbourne.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:remotelearning@ecclesbourne.derbyshire.sch.uk)

## Year 11 and 13

I would now like to address our Year 11 and 13 students directly. The Ofqual consultation on grade awarding closes on 29 January and we expect to hear soon after that date 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.



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For Year 11 and 13 students we want to emphasise the importance of staying focused and completing your courses so that you are fully prepared for your next steps. Students should continue to prepare for scheduled mock examinations and follow teachers' directions about the work you need to submit for assessment. We will write to you again next week with the arrangements to re-schedule your mock exams. Timetables for this year's mocks will also be updated on the school website in the Examinations section at that time. Once again, be reassured that your teachers will do all they can to make sure you are fully prepared to achieve your potential. To all our GCSE, A Level and BTEC students, remember that we are here for you. Your positivity, good humour and fortitude in very trying circumstances is truly inspiring to all of us who teach at the school. 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 announced yesterday that school 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. 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.

## **Coronavirus Testing**

Coronavirus testing using the rapid lateral flow test is available to staff and those students attending critical worker provision. Since we last wrote to you, the government have changed their guidance on daily testing of close contacts of confirmed cases. This will no longer be offered as an alternative to self-isolation. Thank you to parents who have logged on to ParentPay to provide parental consent.

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