



Nailsea School

7th April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

With every news update, sadly, the health crisis seems to be escalating. Although there have been no specific announcements about timelines and dates, we should assume that the current arrangements will continue for an extended period after Easter. As ever we will ensure that our families are kept regularly up to date.

School opening

Children of key workers are continuing to attend school during what would have been the Easter break. In order for us to safeguard staff there is a balance between opening the school to ensure these important frontline workers can continue their roles and reducing the amount of staff that we are asking to come into work, as nationally people are being asked to stay at home. We have assumed that all parents that wanted to let us know about their children attending for the rest of this week would have done so. I would ask that any parents who are keyworkers that need to use the school facilities in **wk comm 13th April (including Monday 13th April) to notify their child's Head of House by Thursday 9th April at noon, at the latest**. Needless to say we do want to help support our key worker families however we can during this challenging period, whilst balancing the health and wellbeing of our staff.

Students in year 11 and 13

Hopefully parents and students would have seen my letter last week, following Ofqual's announcement on how grades are going to be agreed. At this stage the process only covers GCSEs and A Levels and once further details have been shared regarding vocational and technical qualifications, we will be in contact again. One key message from the announcement was that no additional work should be submitted and students will not be disadvantaged if they are not set, or were unable to complete work, since the school has been closed. Importantly, Ofqual have formally asked schools not to send predictions to parents/carers and any grades that you may have had in recent weeks as part of the normal reporting process cannot be taken as the final grade students will be given. The aim is that all official grades are available no later than the usual August deadline. I know this situation will continue to be causing anxiety for students and parents but I want to restate that no student will be disadvantaged as a result of this situation.

Phone check ins

Staff are continuing to contact students for a check in, with the aim that every student will be contacted before the end of the Easter break. Just a reminder that although the school is closed to the vast majority of students there is always someone at the end of an email or phone line if there is an issue or problem you would like some support with.

Free School Meals

The government confirmed details of their supermarket voucher scheme over the weekend. Nationally, there has been some issues with the way this new system has started which the school has no control over. If you are eligible for free school meals for your child/children and have not received these vouchers, please get in touch so that we can support you as quickly as possible. I am also aware that, some families' circumstances may have changed as a result of the current crisis. If you think that your child/children may now be eligible for free school meals but you have not registered, please apply via this link <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/local-schools/schoolmeals/freeschoolmeals/>

Trips

The Finance team have been working hard on a number of insurance claims and refunds for the trips and events that were in the calendar. I would ask that families are patient, given that we are in discussion with external companies, who are nationally dealing with a large number of cancellations. Contact will be made as soon as possible.

Work Experience

It is with regret that we have made the decision to cancel work experience for year 10 students. Many employers, also going through a tumultuous period, would find the situation to host placements in the summer a challenge and many have already contacted us withdrawing their offers. Furthermore, if there is the possibility that we could return to school in the identified work experience week, we would like to see year 10 students back in classes. Once we have returned to normal, we will look at how students can be supported to find alternative placements out of school time. All students that have gone through the planning should also remember that the process of applying and possibly being interviewed for placements would have helped them gain important skills which they will be able to use in the future.

Safeguarding

I am aware that many children and families are finding this situation a struggle and I recognise that there are social, emotional and health impacts for all of us. As I have reiterated in my phone calls to families, although the school is closed to the large majority of students, staff can be contacted through email and there is always someone in school during the school day. I know a number of teachers and support staff have continued their communications with families in the last few weeks. I thought it would be useful to pass on these links for additional support and help but please do not hesitate to contact the school or me directly if you are struggling to find the help and support you need:

Support for parents:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/> - this reviews apps, games, books and films to help parents understand the positive and negative aspects and appropriateness for their child online

<https://oursafetycentre.co.uk/> - App, website and game guides on setting up security, privacy and how to report and block

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/> - Articles and advice on a variety of topics to address with children

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/> - Help to set up parental controls

Support for students:

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

<https://contact.org.uk>

<https://barnardos.org.uk>

I hope by the time ‘term 5’ would have started on 20th April there may be some further clarity regarding timelines where I will contact you again. In the meantime, I wish you and your families a happy Easter weekend.

Please keep safe and be kind to each other.

Yours faithfully.

Dee Elliott