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Principal: Mrs Helen Watts



Dear Parents and Carers,

31st March 2020

I hope this update finds you all well and that you finding comfort in your families. We have had a number of queries this week which I will aim to address below.

Easter provision for key workers

Acle Academy will be entering into a cluster arrangement with our feeder schools to provide provision for critical workers over the Easter holidays. Acle Academy staff will be supporting primary schools with staffing provision. Families this concerns have been contacted directly. However, if you feel you need urgent provision and your family circumstances meet the critical worker criteria, please email hwatts@acle.norfolk.sch.uk and we will arrange provision for you.

Food parcels

Last week the Local Authority asked us to contact parents whose children are in receipt of Free School Meals to see whether they would be interested in food parcels if the LA were able to offer this service. We spoke to many families who indicated they would be interested in this service. Unfortunately, the Local Authority have confirmed that **they will not be offering this service**. We have been told by the Local Authority that we need to direct families that are experiencing hardships to local foodbanks. The Local Authority issued the following statement:

*“For those families who are struggling to provide food due to changes in circumstances and hardship, there will communications going out from the districts this week about how families and vulnerable residents can ask for assistance. **This information will be going directly to households**. Schools will not be asked to provide this support.
The advice is that all food banks remain open currently and districts are supporting their supplies where they can.”*

The Government has also provided a Hardship Fund and is putting in measures to help people if you are in need of this support, please visit your local council website and follow the advice. Please do not visit your council offices, you will be able to access the information and ask for assistance either online or by phone - www.broadland.gov.uk/coronavirus or call 01508 533933

Free School Meals Vouchers

The Government has recently announced a scheme to support children entitled to free school meals by providing £15 worth of supermarket vouchers per week. At present, we do not know how these vouchers will be delivered to families but it our understanding that this will commence after Easter from the 20th April. Until that point, FSM children will continue to be provided with a packed lunch that they can collect from school.

Continuing education at home

We appreciate that this is a very difficult time for many families and that trying to work from home whilst supporting your children, poses many challenges. We have received lots of feedback which varies from students requesting more work, to students finding it difficult to cope. Our advice to all students is to do what you can, but not to worry if you do not understand something. Our teachers are on the end of an email and will aim to deal with queries within two days. Staff have received lots of email correspondence from children and cannot always respond immediately. Like you, many of our staff are having to care for their own children or share laptops and computers with their own family, so are therefore having to work at different times. We will try our best to respond to queries as soon as we can.

We know that some students are struggling with the various methods of collecting their work set. All staff have been reminded to set work via class charts and that this should be set or scheduled for each day rather than all at once at the beginning of the week. We ask staff to use class charts as the primary method for setting work as this allows us to monitor what is being set. Staff may refer students to google classrooms for further detailed information or to resource banks which are stored centrally. Google classrooms allows students to submit work and converse with their classmates and is therefore a useful resource. Please can we remind all students that any comments made via google classrooms must adhere to our school ethos of respect. Disrespectful or rude comments will result in the child's account being frozen.

We appreciate that many children are working very hard at home and would love to receive feedback from their teachers. Our staff do not have capacity to mark and offer individual feedback and this is not the Government expectation at this time. However, staff are happy to be kept in the loop with students' progress and will offer house points to students who are completing good work.

Work set for Easter

Our term finishes on Wednesday the 1st April and recommences on Monday 20th April. Therefore staff will continue to set work as usual up to Wednesday in line with their usual timetable. We recognise that all children need a break and rest from learning, however, we also recognise that these are unprecedented times and this holiday will be like no other. Therefore, we have asked staff to set some additional **optional homework** for students that they may wish to complete if they need something to help themselves keep busy.

Year 11

There is a lot of speculation in the media regarding how GCSEs will be assessed. We have received no further information regarding the assessment of GCSEs and until we do receive information, there is no point speculating. Our advice to Year 11 students is to **carry on learning**. Students should ensure they complete the course in all of their subjects via class charts work that is being set. Revision materials will continue to be provided as some students may wish to retake examinations later in the year. There are obvious difficulties with any practical assessments that are needed for certain courses so our advice is to focus on the theory element at present. As soon as we receive further information regarding how examinations will be assessed, we will let you know.

Staff will also be setting pre reading material for Key Stage Five. If students would like to get ahead and prepare for the next stage of their academic career, please email subject teachers for specific advice and guidance.

Further information from the DFE can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

Mrs Pentney is in contact with colleges and will update Year 11 students and parents with further information and guidance as the situation becomes clearer.

There are some fantastic free online courses that are suitable for Year 11 students wishing to prepare for KS5 at futurelearn.com. Please follow the below link.

https://www.futurelearn.com/courses?filter_category=open&filter_course_type=unlimited&filter_availability=started&all_courses=1&fbclid=IwAR1FeaAbpMTBVluECP31pc3vex_mlxE7h4sRuTArFI62CAfD5uDDYvZPTY

Staying Safe online

As we are all now working remotely / online, please find some helpful websites below which give advice and guidance on how to keep your children safe:

Internet matters – support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

London Grid for Learning – support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

Net-aware – support for parents and carers from the NSPCC

Parent info – support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

ThinkUknow – for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

UK safer Internet Centre – advice for parents and carers

In addition to this, if you have chosen to opt for additional online support from online companies and individual tutors, please make sure that this is from a reputable organisation / individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to your children.

Beware of Fraudsters

The Department for Education are warning that parents and guardians are being targeted by scammers. Fraudsters are targeting families with email messages such as, 'If your child is entitled to free school meals send your bank details to the school and they will help with funding while the school is closed'. This message is a SCAM and neither the school nor the DfE would ever ask for your bank details. Please do not follow the link.

Keeping safe

Advice remains the same that the most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves is to wash their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water and stay at home to help save the NHS.

Norfolk was one of the last counties in the country to have confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus, but this should not give us any false assurance. We like the rest of the country have a rapidly escalating situation that requires us all to heed Government advice. It is essential that we take the direction we have been given by the Government and stay at home. The advice was clear – leave home only for:

- Shopping for basic necessities
- One form of exercise a day (on your own or in household groups)
- Any medical need or to care for a vulnerable person
- Travelling to and from work, only if absolutely necessary

Emotional support

Nelson's Journey- a support service for children, is also offering additional support to help children deal with anxiety of fears concerning the current pandemic- please email <http://www.nelsonsjourney.org.uk/coronavirus-anxiety/> for further support.

Public Health England have shared information about how to keep mentally well whilst at home during isolation. Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

If your child is struggling emotionally, please encourage them to contact engage@acle.norfolk.sch and one of our Engage team will be in touch to help support.

Key Contacts for Parents and Carers:

Info@acle.norfolk.sch.uk- we will be checking emails and sending to appropriate colleagues

01493 750431- School phone number

The school website/ Facebook site- we will be providing updates regularly

engage@acle.norfolk.sch.uk for any pastoral support

Childline- 0800 1111

Domestic Abuse helpline- 0808 2000 247

Children's Advice and Duty Service- 01603 223409.

Early Help- <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-help-and-family-support>

MAP- <https://www.map.uk.net/>

Matthew Project- For support with drugs and alcohol- <https://www.matthewproject.org/>

Nelson's Journey- supporting bereavement and coronavirus fears -
<http://www.nelsonsjourney.org.uk/coronavirus-anxiety/>

Online safety- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Please continue to contact the school if you need any support or advice by ringing 01493 750 431 or emailing info@acle.norfolk.sch.uk

Best wishes to you all

Helen Watts