

29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We have now reached the end of four weeks remote education for the majority of our students and I'd like to say thank you for all the support you have offered the school and well done for your daily commitment to your child's education. Many of our staff are parents with school age children ourselves and we know how difficult it is to get children up, ready to learn and motivated to keep going. We understand that it can be a daily struggle in many households, so thank you for keeping going and please let us know if we can support further.

We know from the Prime Minister's announcement this week that we are going to be in this situation a little longer. We do not know any further details at this stage, the school, like you, finds out any new developments through the national news.

Statement from the DFE

The Prime Minister has announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity.

If the Government achieves its target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15th February then those groups will have developed immunity from the virus around three weeks later that is by 8th March. It is for this reason that we hope it will therefore be safe to commence the reopening of schools from Monday 8th March.

Education settings, as well as students, parents and carers will be given at least two weeks' notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education.

Schools and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers after February half-term, as they are now. All other pupils will continue to receive high quality remote education at home.

The Prime Minister has also committed to providing a programme of catch-up into the next financial year. This involves a further £300m of new money to early years, schools and colleges for tutoring, as well as working in collaboration with the education sector to develop specific initiatives for summer schools and a coronavirus (COVID-19) premium to support catch-up.

Remote Provision Update

We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to our launch of live registration and live lessons with many parents and students reporting that they are more engaged and feel more motivated to complete their pre-recorded lessons. Equally, it has been refreshing to see so many staff uplifted from seeing their class. We are confident that the balance of pre-recorded and live lessons still enables students to have a degree of flexibility over their working days and week. I hope that children are able to get away from the computer and go for a walk in daylight at least a few times a week. We have asked

staff to indicate the date of live lessons in advance in the classroom stream so this will help students organise their working week more effectively.

Thank you for bearing with us during this first week whilst we all get used to the new system. We have asked students to ensure that they log on to live lessons using their school email account; this helps us ensure their identity when admitting them to the classroom. To help create the optimum teaching and learning environment, where students can interact naturally with each other, we would like students, where possible, to have their cameras on. I am aware that we do have a few students in school who feel quite anxious about this, so if this is the case, I have asked students to email me so I can share that information with staff. It is very difficult to teach to a blank screen so we would hope that the majority of our learners can engage properly with the live lessons. Students are able to blur or choose an alternative background by clicking on the portrait icon in the bottom right hand of their screen, just before they join the meeting.

Laptops

We have received a couple of laptop donations from the local community, which we are sharing with children who need them. If any families have an old laptop that you no longer use and would like to donate, it would be gratefully received. Our ICT team will ensure that any donated laptops are securely wiped of data before distributing to children. If you would like to donate a laptop, please contact info@acle.norfolk.sch.uk for further details.

We have issued 55 laptops across the school and all children who are entitled to pupil premium, now have access. We are aware that some children have shared access with siblings or family members and we would like to gather more information about how this is affecting your child's remote education. This does not necessarily mean that we will be able to provide assistance; it is purely for us to have an accurate understanding of access requirements across the school. If your child has shared access to a laptop or tablet, please complete this enclosed survey.

<https://forms.gle/Li1CkgS8T3sfCVcr5>

Friday 5th February

In recognition of Children's Mental Health week, we will be having a 'circuit breaker' on Friday to allow students to complete activities that will have a positive effect on their mental health. No work will be set on this day. Instead, we would like students to take part in activities that take them away from screen time and help them to express themselves either creatively or physically. For further details, please refer to previous letter from Ms Skarin or visit <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/>

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The logo graphic for Wensum Trust, featuring a stylized wave or ribbon shape in shades of blue and green.

FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Form Tutor parent meetings

Form tutor meetings are available to book again from next week and will be fortnightly thereafter. Tutors will continue to call parents who are unable to make a tutor meeting and our safeguarding team will conduct home visits for any families that we are unable to contact over a sustained period of time.

Lockdown Challenges

Thank you to everyone who has shared photos and videos of their children taking part in the lockdown life skills and PE challenge. Please continue to send these into us so we can celebrate your child's achievements.

Notification of Positive cases

Public Health England requires notification from the school of any positive cases within the student body, despite being in Lockdown. If your child tests positive for Covid 19, please continue to notify the school through the info@acle.norfolk.sch.uk email address or by ringing the school office. It is also important for us to know so we can ensure that staff understand that students will be unable to complete remote learning if they are suffering from symptoms.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend. January is nearly over, the bulbs are starting to come up and hopefully it will start to feel a little warmer and brighter soon.

Best wishes



Helen Watts
Principal

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