

COVID -19 Update – March 26th - Advice on work for students at home and Free School Meals / Trip Refunds, and Booking places next week

Dear Parents and Carers,

Our first week of operating in our new format is coming to a close and staff, students and parents are all adjusting to and learning new ways of working. I hope getting the daily emails is helpful and doesn't add to your workload.

From today, many parents will begin to receive refunds from the trips that we've sadly had to cancel. On the positive side, this will give people some additional cash at a time when many of our families really need it most. We have also taken the decision to send out E-vouchers to families entitled to free school meals. This will be quicker than posting them and they should arrive from today onwards.

Later today you will get sent the booking sheet for places for vulnerable students and children of critical workers to book places for next week. If you are a critical worker and your child can safely stay them, then they should. If they can't, please do book a place – were very proud to be helping you. All vulnerable students, especially those with social workers or in care should be booked a place.

Finally, one question that staff and parents have asked about is SMHW and learning at home. There will be huge amounts of activities available and I know as parent of a Year 8 child myself that this can present issues. I have given the staff advice today that where possible we should try to remove longer projects and add learning in smaller chunks. I know that will take some time, not least as some staff have COVID 19 symptoms and will be too unwell to work at all. So, that will require parents and pupils to take a realistic approach to what work can and should be done - also based on the IT available to households. Certainly, for non-GCSE year groups it is fine for you to decide what learning takes place at home. I know our platform is called "ShowMyHomework" but it is not our expectation that all students are completing all the work, all the time. See it more like a menu of learning that students can do as and when you (and they would like to do it). That provides maximum flexibility to reflect all the different types pf household and families we have.

Also, whilst on this section, there is no expectation that all the work is completed in schoolbooks etc, unless you have them – use what most makes sense to you whether plain paper, a notebook or stored on a PC / tablet / phone. All are perfectly acceptable. I know this places an additional burden on families at a time of national crisis, so all I can ask is that you do what you can, no one will be judging you if either lots of the activities get done or very few of them.

Best regards and wishing you well.

Nick Lewis



Principal

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Principal: **Mr Nick Lewis** Excalibur Academies Trust: a company limited by guarantee

