

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families remain safe and well, and that despite these strange times, you continue to enjoy the fantastic weather. I would like to thank our committed Sybil Elgar staff who have continued to work over the Easter holiday in one form or another; be that contacting homes to check on vulnerable youngsters, liaising with the authorities with regards to risk assessments, working on the national free school meal vouchers scheme and of course all the work that is being done behind the scenes on ensuring that the school is a safe environment.

I know that everyone in the country is going through different experiences during this 'lockdown', depending upon the particular circumstances you and your family are in, my thoughts are with you all. Whatever, your circumstances, as a school we are here for you and will help in any way that we can.

As per my letter to you of 20<sup>th</sup> April we continue to be open for children of keyworkers and for those with additional care needs. **It is important to reiterate that we require 24 hours - notice of your need for your child to attend, this is to ensure that we have the right staff in place at the school and that we are able to complete risk assessments with all concerned parties in order that we can make an informed decision about the safest place for your child.** Thea or Richard will confirm attendance with you - and travel arrangements may be made thereafter as is appropriate.

Please note the following advice and guidance at this difficult time. Please keep communicating with school staff regularly and let us know how you are getting on.

During the ongoing Coronavirus (Covid19) concern we need to be mindful of our collective mental health. There are a number of things that we can do to support and manage our own and our children's wellbeing during such a time. I hope you will find the information, tips and links below helpful to your family and your friends in looking after themselves.

### **Self-care**

There is a lot of growing worry and anxiety for people in these circumstances. Having children and young people at home with many schools closed and social activities limited adds another layer of stress. It is therefore important to consider both our physical health *and* mental health.

It is normal to feel worried, stressed and anxious when we are faced with such uncertainty, but the sooner we acknowledge these emotions and learn to take care of our mental health, the healthier and better equipped we will be to deal with such a challenging time.

### **MIND advice**

Here is some excellent advice from MIND that has been produced specifically to help during Coronavirus:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

There is a lot of additional advice and links covering many topics in each of these areas:

- Advice for staying at home
- Taking care of your mental health and wellbeing
- Support for work, benefits and housing

### **NHS advice**

This NHS advice covers a lot of different areas around '**Mental wellbeing while staying at home**'.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

### **The Mental Health Foundation**

The Mental Health Foundation give good advice for **promoting positive mental health and dealing with concerns**. You can see their guidance here:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/make-it-count-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

### **Gov.UK advice**

This link offers advice on the NEF's '**5 Ways to Wellbeing**'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/five-ways-to-mental-wellbeing>

Please feel free to contact us at any time with any concerns you might have, it is always best to go through your child's tutor teacher/key team member or by using [sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk](mailto:sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk)

Please keep checking our website, as we constantly update this any useful sources of support for parents / carers and students.

### **A new term**

This week marks the start of the summer term and so your son / daughter will once again be receiving work from their class teachers and teams.

In terms of other updates and news from central government regarding schools:

- Despite what you might have read or heard in the media over recent days, I can assure you there are currently no dates set or a timetable in place for when schools will re-open or how that will be managed. As soon as we are given any details regarding this we will let you know.
- The government have confirmed that A level results will be awarded on 13/8/20 and GCSE results on 20/8/20.
- The DfE have also confirmed that all technical and vocational qualifications (eg. BTECs, Functional Skills etc) will be awarded using a calculated approach in the same way as for GCSEs and A levels. Again, further details

will be made available to schools shortly, as each qualification is assessed slightly differently.

- The national Free School Meals voucher scheme is now up and running, despite some initial teething issues. If your child / children are eligible for free school meals and you have any concerns or issues with this scheme, please contact [sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk](mailto:sybil.elgarschool@nas.org.uk)

You might have seen some headlines in the press about additional laptops being made available to schools and those youngsters who do not have IT access. We don't have any details about this as yet but when we do we will be in touch. If in the meantime, if your son / daughter is struggling to access work please contact your child's tutor teacher/key team member and alternative arrangements can be made.

Many thanks for your continued support.

With best wishes to you and your families

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chloe Phillips', with a large loop at the start and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Chloe Phillips  
**PRINCIPAL**