

6th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are certainly living in the middle of a rapidly changing situation, where plans have to change almost immediately after they have been made. Thank you for your patience and understanding at this time and for the support you are giving both your children and us. Hopefully, school can still give families some degree of certainty and consistency during these troubled times. To that end, please see below for an update of current issues:

- **Remote learning:** as before, students will follow their normal timetables and lesson timings and access lessons via Microsoft Teams. Please read our Remote Learning Policy which can be found on our website for further details. Attendance, levels of engagement and behaviour will be closely monitored. The only lessons that might be disrupted, will be those for which a teacher is absent or has joined the academy in January. If your son/daughter is having any access issues please contact their Support and Guidance Manager;
Year 7 – Tina Whiberley (twhiberley@elatschools.co.uk);
Year 8 – Sue Ware (sware@elatschools.co.uk);
Year 9 – Gemma Slade (gslade@elatschools.co.uk);
Year 10 – Gill Gilbert (ggilbert@elatschools.co.uk);
Year 11 – Maria Martin (mmartin@elatschools.co.uk).
- **In-school provision:** this is up and running. The needs of critical worker parents and new vulnerabilities may mean demand for in-school provision grows over the coming weeks. Again, please contact the relevant Support and Guidance Manager to discuss this.
- **Free school meals:** food packages are being put together and distributed for the relevant families and in-school students do of course continue to get their free school meal as normal. If the government reintroduce the voucher scheme we will be in contact again. If any family is struggling, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- **Year 11 and GCSEs:** it is important that parents and students understand that there is much still to be decided nationally about the awarding of grades for Year 11s this summer. Students should not assume that they will not undertake any form of exam style assessment, as it is very likely that Ofqual will expect greater rigour this year in terms of evidence of student attainment. Submission of assignments and schoolwork, along with attendance online or in school are even more important now for Year 11s. We ask for your continued support in ensuring that your son/daughter attends all lessons, demonstrates the levels of effort and motivation that are going to bring about success and that they do everything in their power to fulfil their potential. The planned mock exams will obviously not now take place on the w/b 18.01.21. Although they have been postponed until our return to school, Year 11 will still be expected to sit mock exams in every subject this year so the preparation they have already done for these exams will be extremely useful. We will be in contact to advise exact dates, as soon as the situation becomes clearer.

- **Year 11 Post-16 Applications:** Deadlines for applications to colleges and sixth forms are fast approaching at the end of January. All Year 11 students have now been offered a support session on Teams or via the phone to help them complete their applications for Post-16 courses e.g. A Levels, BTECs or apprenticeships. If your child would like any additional support, please contact mphilpot@elatschools.co.uk.
- **Safeguarding:** a reminder that this remains our number one priority and as such, you should feel able to reach out to pastoral staff and/or our Safeguarding Leads, Ms Pearson or Mrs Seeley if you have any concerns about your own or another child. We appreciate that these are very difficult times for families.
- **Virtual assemblies, competitions and rewards:** these will all be returning from next week so we can unite as a school community, celebrate success, and recognise achievements.
- **Mass testing:** this is still expected but now on a smaller scale. Mass testing will probably roll out before the larger scale school return. As these tests are optional for students, consent and explanatory information will be addressed before any such testing begins.

Thank you, as ever, for your support and do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any concerns or queries. Take care.

Best wishes,



MR. W. THOMPSON
Principal