

31 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Some Further Points to Note**

First of all, I sincerely hope this correspondence finds the families of our academy well.

Secondly, at your convenience, could you please take a few minutes to read as well as take note of the following points:

- As a direct result of a further 60+ of my colleagues in addition to the near 100 who have already volunteered their services thus far, our Mill Road Campus will remain open for the majority of the Easter break. This is so we can continue to support any of our parents and carers who are 'key workers' who cannot find alternative childcare for their children during the regular working day.
- Whilst we will remain open during the Easter holiday, this will not be over the Bank Holiday Weekend and the academy will **fully close at 3:10pm on Thursday 9 April. It will reopen again at 8:00am on Tuesday 14 April.** This is so as to ensure a number of key staff who have been working round-the-clock throughout this challenging period can secure their own rest and recuperation and in doing so, remain active and effective in their vitally important roles for the duration of what is looking like a lengthy closure.
- This means that work will continue to be set over the Easter holiday via Show My Homework, as well as via the academy's email account which can also continue to be used for any questions that you or our students may have regarding any work set. However, whilst some of the work may ask for associated printing, please, there is absolutely no expectation for this to be done if you do not have the facility or funding to do so.
- Staff will endeavour to remain operational between the hours of 8:30am – 3:10pm on weekdays as much as they possibly can and subject to them remaining well or needing to look after their own families or loved ones.

Four further points to note and for your information:

- As of last week, the vast majority of our free school meal families have been in receipt of e-vouchers. After a very brief discussion during our latest conference call yesterday morning, the full Senior Leadership Team unanimously agreed to continue this over the Easter holiday as morally, and in such challenging times for many of our families, there was no other decision to make really. **However, if your child is entitled to a free school meal and you have not received any notification about this as of yet despite our emails and texts being sent out to all contact details we have, please contact Mr Scott, our Director of Finance and Estates, via [R.Scott@plume.essex.sch.uk](mailto:R.Scott@plume.essex.sch.uk) who will swiftly arrange this for you as well as backdate it to 23 March 2020 as well.**
- In terms of news on the GCSE, AS and A level front, whilst we have had information hinting about what may well be happening, we have yet to hear or receive anything definitive. However, an email from Mark Bedlow, Chief Executive of AQA, received late last Friday afternoon clearly stated this is highly likely to come this week at some point. Therefore, and again, once we have received this, the plan will be for the academy's full Senior Leadership Team to conduct a further conference call, discuss the matter at length, devise the necessary plan and then disseminate it to staff, parents, carers and our students themselves as soon as possible.
- Literally hundreds of phone calls have been made to students who are deemed to be our most vulnerable throughout last week and from a core team of staff. I have thanked those colleagues on our behalf whilst also stating that such important work should never be underestimated, especially as the closure period grows in length. Still, these phone calls, which have been well-received by many of you, will only continue until we reopen again.
- At some point tomorrow, we will be gathering together equipment from the academy that will then be delivered to our frontline NHS staff that they can then use as personal protective equipment. I am immensely proud we will be contributing to such a massively important cause.

Finally, I know this remains a somewhat challenging period of time for you, our parents and carers. This is for many reasons of course and as we meander through these somewhat unprecedented and to a certain extent, surreal times. How things have worked and will work will differ in each home, for each family and on an almost daily basis, my own included I can assure you! However, the bottom line is that we're all in uncharted waters at present and as I believe the academy's stakeholders have done remarkably well thus far, we need to continue working together to find a way to successfully navigate our way through this period of time in our lives. Therefore, moving forward and looking ahead, there remains no pressure from me or my colleagues in terms of the work that is set and this I can assure you will remain the case until we are back to what is considered 'normality'. We will simply keep setting it, keep the channels of communication open for any associated questions that need to be asked or queries raised, we will continue to make the calls to our families we feel are in need of extra support and fully respect and understand that whilst for some, a good few hours of home learning may have occurred for that particular day, for others, simply getting through the same 24 hours may be deemed as a monumental success!

Until we converse again, do take care of yourselves and your respective families and thank you once again for your support, considered input and tremendous efforts thus far. I can assure you it has been both noted as well as greatly appreciated and I have every faith it will only continue.

Yours sincerely  
Mr C A Wakefield  
Principal