



Monday 23rd March, 2020.

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'm sure you can imagine that today was a bit strange in school with so many pupils absent from school, yet the pupils in attendance should be commended for their attitude and willingness to engage in learning through TEAMS. We've also seen the majority of pupils who are "social distancing" at home engage in the resources provided by teachers on TEAMS and engage with staff via the post feature about learning and queries relating to resources.

A very small minority of pupils have used this feature as a means to communicate with friends – almost like social media. Whilst it's fantastic that pupils want to maintain their social engagement and close links with friends, it's crucial that TEAMS as a resource remains focused on work and related to queries about learning. If tens or even hundreds of posts are made "off topic" this will make it incredibly difficult for staff to keep track of requests for support and therefore respond to those pupils who need support. Of course, should anyone use the resource inappropriately they run the risk of having their account suspended.

We are also aware that Microsoft have reported some outage of their TEAMS systems as a significant number of people globally are logging on to work from home. These tend to be temporary concerns and result in the loss of some functionality. Fortunately, whilst there have been some isolated incidents for pupils it seems that most of our pupils have experienced using TEAMS without disruption. We understand that Microsoft are undertaking work to ensure enhanced capacity for the service.

Today we issued free school meals vouchers to all pupils eligible but not in school. These have been issued in the post and so parents will receive these in the next few days.

For those pupils attending school, we are relaxing the uniform requirements from tomorrow and pupils can attend school wearing their own clothes that are appropriate for school should they choose to. If pupils wish to continue wearing their school uniform this is fine too.

It's important to remember that "social distancing" is a key strategy in limiting the spread of infection. Pupils should be limiting their social interactions whilst away from school and not congregating with a number of friends. Of course, they should ideally be at home interacting with TEAMS and following their "normal" school timetable during school hours.

Once again can we thank parents for their support over the last few days and across the day today, it's fantastic to see our school community tackling this collectively and doing all we can to support the national effort.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin
Principal.

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