



3 April 2020

Dear Parent

As we move into the Easter holidays, I wanted to give you a brief update on what has been happening across the Trust and our plans for after the break. I know your respective Headteachers have been keeping in touch, but I thought you might be interested in what is going on more widely.

Thank you to all of you who have respected the advice to keep children at home unless absolutely necessary. We are more than happy to provide programmes for our key worker families and vulnerable children, but keeping numbers as low as possible ensures we can do so safely.

Below are some highlights from our school but I also urge you to look at the schools' respective websites for more details and letters from the Headteacher.

Great Hollands Primary School

We have been able to offer all of our families who are in receipt of Free School Meals a £25 grocery voucher. We did this well before the government voucher scheme which will start on 20th April.

Dennis our Therapy Dog and his pals at Canine Assisted Learning who have donated many bags full of shopping that we have distributed to a number of families.

Dennis has also been Face-Timing some of the children he works with. If you are sent a login link for Dennis please do try to use it.

The reduced teaching team we have at the school have managed to upload many learning resources on to our school website and my thanks to Ms Sharp who spent 2 days delivering printout packs directly to some of our families



Finally, excited Reception pupils are getting picture updates on how their caterpillars are growing – very hungry caterpillars indeed!

Maiden Erlegh Secondary Provision

Our Secondary provision is going extremely well and we should like to thank the staff, teaching and support staff, who have made this happen. It is lovely to see students from all three secondary schools getting on so well together.

It is not school as one would recognise it traditionally and the primary aim has been to provide a safe and supervised environment, in which students of key workers and vulnerable children can complete the work set by teachers for their respective year groups. There is a daily PE routine which includes staff and students in the morning as well as specialist sessions on PE, art, food technology and drama. The students have also enjoyed their break times in the excellent Sports Hall. We are very grateful for colleagues who have run these sessions and we will look to continue these specialist activities into the summer term.



We must also thank our schools for sending science equipment (eg: goggles) to Woodley Centre and Parkside Surgeries and more to go to the RBH next week.

With regard to the wider school community, we must thank staff from all three schools who are rallying around in very challenging circumstances to ensure work is available and appropriate for all students. It has been a key feature of all three schools to have worked hard in maintaining a range of different activities that both supported well-being and keep a sense of community; these have included online assemblies, phone calls home, daily welfare checks for the vulnerable and most of all, tried to use Google Classroom to maintain contact with the students whenever possible.

Maiden Erlegh School

Plans for after Easter include House competitions, assemblies and subject competitions #TeamMaidenErlegh. I would urge you to read Mr Gibson's letter which details a raft of highlights from the school.

Some snippets include:

- The way in which students and staff have adapted to the online learning environment and worked together to get the best from the current situation.
- Heads of Year have been busy creating our end of term assembly to virtually present to you!
- 145 staff dialled in to our first virtual staff briefing yesterday to plan for after Easter.
- New Year 6 students have received their 'Welcome to the Team' letter.
- Staff have been checking in on vulnerable students for the past two weeks.

Since **Maiden Erlegh in Reading** been closed we have all been very busy:

- Both staff and students have made the adjustments to online learning and most are doing really well.
- The Arts team are running a weekly "virtual" arts competition
- Staff are using online technology to meet with each other to continue the business of school—including lots of team meetings and even a whole staff team briefing.
- Some of our tutors have been pleased to see tutees in a virtual tutor time using zoom – just to check in with each other and say hi.
- We have made over 135 welfare phone calls to vulnerable student this week
- Students have been feeding back to us on a daily basis through the Classcharts app about their wellbeing – by simply tapping a "face". Students can add a comment as well if they wish and our Heads of Year are monitoring. This has been a great tool in alerting us to students who are struggling and could do with some extra support. 
- We were delighted to be able to donate dozens of goggles from the science department to local doctors surgeries and community nurses to help with the PPE shortage issues

Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge

Since closing the real school we have been so busy with our virtual school and keeping our community together. We have:

- Called all the students to check on their welfare and how they are engaging with the work
- Surveyed parents and students to ensure they have a chance to comment on how our virtual lessons are running.
- Done daily welfare checks include visits to our most vulnerable students
- Held staff briefings and a staff pub quiz all via Zoom to keep up staff morale
- Donated a range of protective equipment to Sonning Common Health Centre to support them in their work

Hamilton School

During the past two weeks, all Hamilton School students have been provided with hard-copy work packs and lessons on Google Classroom, or set as a challenge during our daily pastoral and support calls home to parents and students.

Some notable highlights are three poems, written by one of our Key Stage 4 students, which we feel are good enough to be published (watch this space!) and the completion of cooking tasks, including making meals from WW2 rations or producing a recipe for our soon-to-be-available 'Hamilton School Lockdown Cookbook'.

One student submitted a PowerPoint presentation containing photos and instructions for his own cheesy garlic bread.



4:heat oven to 200c/180c fan/gas 6. remove the cling, then bake the bread for 30 minutes until golden and risen. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then cut into 12 pieces and serve.

We have had very positive feedback from students and parents about the daily contact they are receiving from the school's pastoral support team by phone and are busy preparing extra work for students who have requested this over the Easter break.

We would like to get a clearer picture of numbers for after Easter and we will be sending a short survey out over the Easter break for key worker families and vulnerable children to express their interest for the next half term.

School-based Provision post Easter

As you are aware, we are operating a school provision for a limited number of children. These are:

- Children of keyworkers who cannot be safely cared for at home.
- Children with an EHCP who cannot be safely cared for at home.
- Children with a social worker.

Over the Easter holidays, we will be asking parents of children eligible for this provision to confirm their intention to send children after Easter. This may include some children who have not accessed the provision previously.

If you have not accessed a school place to date, but believe that your child is eligible for one, please watch out for the survey in the second week of the Easter holidays.

Other notices and information

Examinations and SATs

Guidance from Ofqual and the DfE about the awarding of qualifications this year has been announced today. The guidance document for parents and students can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877842/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents.pdf

The school and Trust now needs to consider the implications and necessary actions that we need to take and we will communicate these with you after the Easter break. We know this is an incredibly anxious time for students in examination years, but please bear with us as we work through the process. Please can I point out to students and parents the following instruction from Ofqual:

“Centres must not, under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order of students with students, or their Parents/Carers or any other individuals outside the centre, before final results have been issued. This is to protect the integrity of teachers’ judgements, and to avoid teachers, heads of department, senior leaders or Heads of Centre being put under pressure by students and parents, to submit a grade that

is not supported by the evidence. Since the final grades for some or all students in a centre could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage students' expectations."

Thank you for your understanding and support for this process.

Laptops and other devices

Some students are struggling to access devices at home (what with parents working from home and children using them). If anyone has any spare devices, however simple, that they could lend to another student, please contact us at: MERoffice@maidenerleghschool.co.uk.

Safeguarding

Behind the scenes our staff are checking on our vulnerable students regularly. They have contacted the families of every child who has a social worker as well as other children about whom they have concerns. They are making calls, sending emails and in some cases driving past houses to give students a wave! In the first two weeks we have logged hundreds of 'COVID 19 Welfare Checks' on our systems and that will continue for as long as school is closed.

Supporting children and young people with worries about COVID-19

The internet is full of so much advice for parents that it can be overwhelming.

The government have issued advice: [here](#).

In conjunction with Oxford University, our friends at Reading University have pulled together lots of the information into one advice sheet that we hope parents and carers will find useful:

<https://www.maidenerleghtrust.org/attachments/download.asp?file=108&type=pdf>.

It would be sensible to mention to your child that the Child line website (<https://www.childline.org.uk>) has lots of useful information and advice. Even the most resilient children have worries and concerns.

The one recurring theme in all the advice is about connectivity – encourage your children to communicate with their friends and stay in touch using any means available to them.

Once again, I want to thank and praise my colleagues for their work and dedication in these strange times. I am humbled by what they are doing. Please know also that we are thinking of all of you and wishing you all the very best.

Keep safe.

Yours sincerely



Miss M Davies
Chief Executive Officer

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