

31st March 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

We hope that pupils have remained focussed on their schoolwork since school closed a week ago. Whilst the content we have set is challenging, we have done our best to provide work that can be accessed and completed with relative ease. We understand that parents and pupils would like ways for work to be submitted and for work in a variety of formats to be set. We are working on our second release of work for all pupils ahead of the Easter Holidays. We will do what we can to respond to the feedback we have received but remain grateful to parents for their understanding that we are working in unprecedented circumstances.

This letter is quite a long one; please do persevere to the end as it contains everything you need to know for now. Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions during week 1 of school closures, and a few requests from us:

1. What will the next batch of schoolwork look like and when will it be released?

There are two new work pack releases coming up. The first will be at the start of the Easter Holiday to provide some focus and things to do for pupils. These will include less academic activities and more competition challenges for which prizes will be sent in the post for winners after the Easter break.

The second work pack release will be on Monday 20th April and will last for two weeks. For Years 7, 8 and 9 this will be in an online format with a range of activities to complete – see question 2 below for how progress will be checked.

For Years 10 and 12, hard copy packs will be posted out to pupils on Monday 20th April so they can use online resources but complete work on paper and using booklets. This will provide variety and strengthen their learning further.

For Years 11 and 13, a new preparatory curriculum covering things like First Aid, Careers, Financial Management and Driving Theory Lessons will be released on Monday 20th April. Again this will last for two weeks and will serve to provide appropriate new learning whilst we are waiting for guidance from Ofqual on grading.

2. Will anyone be in touch to check on my child's progress?

Yes. We are beginning a process of communication with families this week. It will be carried out primarily by your child's form tutor or their Head of House. Where possible, this will be by email. The contact will check in on how much work has been completed, answer any questions you or your child may have, and set some targets for the week ahead.

In addition, the Easter activities and work for the first two weeks of the summer term will now require an evidence submission to the subject email addresses so that teachers can check on the progress pupils are making. Marking and feedback will not occur, but recognition and reward for excellence, will. Each subject's work schedule will stipulate what evidence should be submitted and how it is to be sent. In most cases, this will be a photograph of the work completed, sent in by email.



Here is a reminder of the subject email addresses:

Faculty	Contact	Email address
Mathematics, Psychology and H&S	Ms E Raine	mathssupport@decschool.co.uk
English and Drama	Mr T Hutton/ Mrs R Atton	englishsupport@decschool.co.uk
Science	Mr B Feenan	sciencesupport@decschool.co.uk
MFL	Ms V Lopez	mflsupport@decschool.co.uk
Humanities	Mrs N Delaney	humanitiessupport@decschool.co.uk
PE and Creative Arts	Mr J Smith	pecreativesupport@decschool.co.uk
Media, Computing, Business and Tech	Mr O Hanson	mediatechsupport@decschool.co.uk

3. What should Year 11 and 13 work on now that exams have been cancelled?

We are still waiting for definitive information from exam boards and Ofqual about the grading process this year for Year 11 and Year 13. Please see information above about the short term plan for Year 11 and 13. In addition and in the meantime, Year 11 should refer to the Year 12 section of the website to begin learning some of the content of the A-Levels/ BTECs they may be studying in September. For Year 13, Mr Hanson will be providing some pre-reading for University courses soon for students who are starting their degree in September.

4. Is there anything else to consider for a child who is home-learning?

Online safety. With increasing time on the internet completing school work, online safety is just as important as it has always been. We recommend a structure and routine for school work to prevent distractions and the same safer internet practices still apply. Click here for a quick reminder of how to keep your child safe online and on social media: www.decschool.co.uk/parental-platform-guides

The same expectations of mobile phone checking and social media oversight apply now just as they did when school was open. For more information and a reminder of the legal age limits of social media apps, click here: www.decschool.co.uk/parental-platform-guides

5. How will my child catch up on all of the teaching they have missed?

We have already begun planning schemes of work to catch up the teaching time that has been and will be, missed. It is still unclear how long schools will be closed for so we cannot yet have a complete plan, but we have made a start. Rest assured, we will make sure your child catches up quickly. To help this, we are reviewing the calendar for the Summer Term and, if schools re-open in time, we are likely to make some changes so that teaching is not interrupted.

6. Have school got correct contact details for me?

When contact is made by your child's Form Tutor or Head of House, they will ask you to update us if any of your contact details have changed so that our system is fully up to date.





7. Will school be open for children who need it during the Easter holiday?

Yes. We are continuing our provision for children of key workers who cannot be cared for at home throughout the Easter break. This will include Good Friday and Easter Monday as we understand that key workers, particularly in the NHS, may now need to work over the bank holiday weekend. We want to continue to play our part in supporting the national effort. We are extremely grateful to our staff who have volunteered to look after children in school over Easter.

Remember – even if you are a key worker, if your child can be safely cared for at home, they should stay at home.

If you are a key worker and you require provision over Easter, it is essential that you contact us as soon as possible. Please email Mr Ali who will generate the list of pupils and plan staffing accordingly (w.ali@decschool.co.uk)

8. What do we do if we are struggling with ICT and internet access at home?

We understand that many families may have one laptop or tablet to share amongst all members of the household. Whilst this may be difficult, we hope that it is working as best it can.

If you do not have internet access or you do not have a laptop/ suitable device at home for your child to work on, please contact Ms Shahmiri so we can provide alternative work (k.shahmiri@decschool.co.uk).

9. Will I continue to receive FSM vouchers?

Yes. We will continue to provide FSM vouchers for pupils who are eligible. A new voucher will be released by the end of this week for the first two weeks of the Summer Term. You will receive a voucher in the post if your child is eligible for FSM. As per Government stipulation, FSM vouchers are not being issued for the Easter holiday as pupils would not receive free school meals during school holidays.

10. How is safeguarding of children being managed whilst school is closed?

There is a Safeguarding Leader on school site every day, and the most senior staff are all available. If a child is due to be in school and doesn't turn up, the usual processes are applied to ensure they are safe. If we are concerned about a child's safety, the same processes apply; we continue to work closely with Birmingham Children's Trust to deal with concerns or to monitor our most vulnerable children.

11. Whilst school is closed, what do I do if I am concerned about the safety/ welfare of a child?

If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, you should report the issue immediately to a senior member of staff. Email either Mr Dunn (m.dunn@deschool.co.uk) or Mr Walton (c.walton@decschool.co.uk).



RESPECT

ASPIRE



Dame Elizabeth
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BELIEVE

COMMIT

I hope that the points above provide some reassurance and answers to questions many of you have asked.

If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact school in the usual way (enquiry@decschool.co.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Mr M. Dunn
Head Teacher



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MATRIX
ACADEMY
TRUST

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