

20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

Today marks the start of the Summer Term. No one would ever have imagined we would be in this situation. The daily news briefings are still reporting some worrying data and headlines but it would seem that some light is beginning to appear at the end of a long tunnel.

### Firstly, Thank you.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of our parents and carers who are key workers. From keeping the food supply chain moving through to our NHS medical staff who care for our friends and family, thank you. Thanks also to our pupils who are supporting their parents/carers, or those simply being resilient and mature in these difficult times. I'm sure you will also join me in thanking DEC staff who have provided personal contact, work for pupils to be doing, as well as staffing school to remain open for children of key workers. We all have our part to play and we are thankful to each other and to everyone in our community.

### Updates and answers to frequently asked questions

#### 1. When is school re-opening?

We understand that many of you, like us, are hoping for school to reopen so we can get back to normal. There have been some media rumours that schools are due to reopen. I can confirm that these are not factual. For now, schools remain closed. The Government have been clear that they will continue to be guided by science and when evidence suggests it is safe to do so; schools will be told they can reopen. As yet we do not know when or how this will happen. When we have definitive information, we will share it with you without delay.

#### 2. When are the next set of FSM vouchers to be sent?

We have been directed by Government to move over to the National Voucher Scheme for ordering and providing FSM vouchers. We have placed an order for vouchers – they are due to be released by email on 21<sup>st</sup> April. Each voucher is for £60 per child and will cover a period of four weeks (20.04.20 to 17.05.20). We will then issue a new set of vouchers. **If you have not yet confirmed your email address with us, please do so as soon as possible by emailing Mrs Vigers ([c.vigers@decschool.co.uk](mailto:c.vigers@decschool.co.uk)). The National Voucher Scheme relies on email for vouchers to be sent.**

#### 3. When is the new set of work for pupils being published?

We have published new work today for the next two weeks.

For Years 10 and 12, hard copy packs have been posted out. Pupils can use online resources but complete work on paper and using booklets. Topics and activities have been carefully selected taking account of the catch-up curriculum that will run when pupils return to school.

For Years 7, 8 and 9, work is online with a range of activities to complete.

For Years 11 and 13, a new preparatory curriculum covering things like First Aid, Careers, Financial Management and Driving Theory Lessons has been published on the website.

All work can be found here: [www.decschool.co.uk/working-at-home](http://www.decschool.co.uk/working-at-home)

If you require paper based work due to computer/ internet access issues, please contact school in the usual ways and we will arrange for work to be posted out to you.

Please also note that today, BBC Teach has launched their home-learning pack:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/secondary/zkqp47h>

If you have any questions please email the following addresses according to the subject:

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

#### 4. How will work and progress be monitored by teachers?

Contact has now been made with all families either via an email from your child's form tutor or a call from their Head of House.

In addition, the Easter activities and work for the first two weeks of the summer term require an evidence submission to the subject email addresses above 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.

#### 5. Where can I access mental health support for my child?

Kooth has been introduced in Birmingham for children. Kooth is a free, safe and anonymous service to support young people's emotional and mental health in Birmingham. Because young people have suddenly had exams cancelled, transition arrangements thrown up in the air and are dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on their loved ones, this is important.





Dame Elizabeth  
**CADBURY**

[www.decschool.co.uk](http://www.decschool.co.uk)

The new service was successfully launched on 14<sup>th</sup> April for young people from Year 6, aged 11 up to 25. The full offer, including online self-referral can be accessed at [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com). Kooth is linked into the wider mental health support from Forward Thinking Birmingham and offers:

- Online mental health counselling and chat services from midday to 10pm during the week, and 6pm to 10pm at weekends
- Peer to peer support through moderated discussion forums
- Self-care tools and resources to build resilience
- Early response to and identification of emotional wellbeing and mental health problems
- And there are no waiting lists, referrals or thresholds to access the service

#### 6. The Coronavirus pandemic has caused financial hardship in our household, where can I get advice?

For your child, if you are experiencing financial hardship, they may now be eligible for Free Schools Meals. If they are, they are also eligible for the National Voucher Scheme which provides supermarket vouchers of £15 per child per week. If you think your child may now be eligible, contact Ms Shahmiri by email ([k.shahmiri@decschool.co.uk](mailto:k.shahmiri@decschool.co.uk)) as soon as possible and we will carry out the necessary eligibility checks.

For additional advice, the following charities/ websites may be useful:

- The Citizens Advice Bureau is a great source of information on a number of topics but specific advice on what to do if you cannot pay your bills can be found here: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/if-you-cant-pay-your-bills-because-of-coronavirus](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/if-you-cant-pay-your-bills-because-of-coronavirus)
- You may also find it useful to access information from Step Change debt charity here: [www.stepchange.org/debt-info/debt-and-coronavirus](http://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/debt-and-coronavirus)
- Or from The Money Advice Service here: [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money)

We hope the above update provides you with useful information. In addition, we recommend all parents visit the following website pages to ensure you have all the tools you need to continue home schooling effectively:

[www.decschool.co.uk/working-at-home](http://www.decschool.co.uk/working-at-home)  
[www.decschool.co.uk/parental-platform-guides](http://www.decschool.co.uk/parental-platform-guides)  
[www.decschool.co.uk/parental-guides](http://www.decschool.co.uk/parental-guides)  
[www.decschool.co.uk/safeguarding](http://www.decschool.co.uk/safeguarding)

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](mailto:enquiry@decschool.co.uk)).

Yours sincerely,

Mr M. Dunn  
Head Teacher