



23rd March 2020

Dear parent / carer,

I hope you all had a good / manageable weekend. The vast majority of you have your children at home today or have arranged appropriate care. Having been in school since this morning, it would appear all teachers have set work for their students and they are getting on well with their education at home. It would appear that Doodle and other on-line platforms have been particularly slow, due to the high national demand. I'm afraid we just have to accept this. Year 10 have received a more personalised set of work, and I thank all parents in the younger age groups for understanding this principle. I addressed every student in school on Friday through a series of assemblies. I made it as clear as I could that students should be in the house working and not 'playing out' with their friends. Our social responsibility is vital.

This morning we opened our doors to a small group of students. Over the weekend, there was a definite change in the government's position regarding this provision. Initially, the guidance we received as a school was very much that 'the provision was there if you needed it, but really it's up to you'. The messages over the weekend however were far clearer. **Only use this provision as a very last resort.** We want to do everything we can to reduce larger gatherings of people. This includes within the school. I am delighted to be able to help those families who really need the help at this point but must emphasise again that children should only be sent to school if there are absolutely no other alternatives. Consider what you would normally do at the weekend or over the 6 weeks' holidays. The safety of students and staff is absolutely vital.

Free school meals provision has finally been arranged today, after what seems to have been a significant national issue. If you are eligible for free school meals, we will be posting out vouchers for Tesco tomorrow. They will cover two weeks' worth of meals and we will repeat the process until school re-opens. If you are eligible for FSM and you have recently changed your address, please contact the school in the morning so we can update our system.

I sincerely want to thank the vast majority of you who continue to take full responsibility for your children's education and well-being. The reality of the situation we face is becoming increasingly real. Let's all do our part as the Woodham community.

Stay safe,

Andrew Bell
Headteacher

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