

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Weekly Round-Up to Parents during Lockdown**

As our first week of this new term draws to a close, I want to say thank you for your support and patience as we have navigated various government announcements to ensure that our provision for the students is the very best that it can be, and that we continue to support both them and you during this difficult time. My intention, as we move through this extended period of lockdown is to send you a weekly update of key information and also celebration from the school. All of this information will also be available on the website, should you need to access it.

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Remote Learning:

Can I please take this opportunity to thank you for supporting your child with their online learning this week. We are very conscious of the pressure home learning places upon families and are continually reviewing our provision to ensure it meets the needs of our students when working remotely. Based on the feedback we have received this week, we are going to make a number of changes to our remote learning provision which we hope you will welcome:

1. We have asked all teachers to be available to respond to questions during the timetabled slot so that students can receive immediate help and support within the Google Classroom.
2. We have increased the number of 'live-streamed' lessons so that students in all year groups will have some 'live' teaching. We will be reviewing and amending this provision every fortnight.
3. We have asked teachers in our more 'practical' subjects to consider how they might reduce screen time for students. With this in mind we are pleased to report:
  - I. In Core PE, students will have a weekly challenge to complete. Maintaining physical and mental well-being is of paramount importance and we hope that these activities can help our students to do this. We will also be launching a 'steps' competition too, so please look out for that.
  - II. In Technology, students will be asked to regularly undertake a variety of practical challenges.
  - III. In Art, students will create a visual journal. A journal that is personal, promotes inquisitiveness, is expressive and allows them to show off their technical and graphic skills.
  - IV. In Drama, students are being asked to watch pieces of theatre and record their own monologues.
  - V. In Music, students are encouraged to use their own instruments to complete tasks if they are able to. Students are also asked to listen and reflect rather than to watch as much as possible.
4. From Monday 11<sup>th</sup>, we will be running an online tutorial session every Friday. This will take place during the normal tutor period for every year group and students will be able to turn their camera on so they can see each other and their tutor too. We hope this will remind students that they remain very much part of the Isca family.

Where cameras are turned on, students must not be in their bedroom or wearing nightwear or anything else inappropriate. They do not need to wear their school uniform!

5. As I mentioned in an earlier letter, we will be monitoring daily the attendance and participation of students in their online lessons. To get their 'attendance' mark, students must submit their work from each lesson on the day of that lesson. Where students are not submitting work, we will send you a Group Call message on Tuesdays and a phone call on Wednesdays and Thursdays from their tutor where needed. We want to support students and their families during this time and will do everything we can so please let us know if we can support you: [onlinesupport@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:onlinesupport@iscaexeter.co.uk)
6. From Monday 11<sup>th</sup>, we will also be operating a protocol for online 'behaviour' during remote learning. We will ask all students to ensure their cameras and microphones are off when they join a 'live lesson' and will remind them that all lessons are recorded for safeguarding purposes. Students may 'unmute' when instructed to by the teacher, and only then. Group 'chat' during lessons is to be restricted to the task in hand only please. If students are making inappropriate or unhelpful comments, their teacher will issue a 'reminder'. If this continues, they will be removed from the online lesson and you can expect a phone call as follow up. I'm sure you can appreciate that teaching online can be a challenge and we therefore need to be clear about our expectations so that students can continue to receive expert, high quality teaching in their lessons.
7. If your son/daughter does not have access to a mobile device or is struggling with the one they are using, please can you contact their Head of Year in the first instance so that we can provide help and support.

Please also continue to provide us with feedback on our remote learning provision: [onlinesupport@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:onlinesupport@iscaexeter.co.uk). I know how much your words of thanks and encouragement have meant to our teaching staff this week, so thank you very much.

#### Homework:

I also mentioned in an earlier letter this week that we are expecting students to complete their daily homework from 11th January. (This will be 'week 2' for most subjects but may be 'week 3' for others, this will however be made clear in each subject area). We are in the process of posting out the new Knowledge Organisers and homework books. Please bear with us as this is a very large job! However, they are also available online <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/students/homework/>

#### Exams:

The announcements from the Secretary for Education this week regarding the cancellation of all examinations and that centre assessed grades will be used, will of course have implications for our Year 11 and 10 students. We do not yet know specifically what this will entail but we know that this will be similar to the methodology used by schools in 2020 but with some external moderation / validation. As you might be aware this involved teachers assessing performance using class work and homework, coursework, mock exam results and other additional evidence. We are expecting updates from the DfE (Department for Education) and Ofqual in the coming weeks and as and when we know more, we will of course update you. However, in the meantime, it is really important that students attend all online lessons and keep working hard, as every piece of work completed will make a difference for them.

#### Essential School:

If your child is [eligible](#) and requires a place at our Essential School but is not currently booked in, please complete the [Booking a Place for Essential School Updated Form](#) to indicate their requirements for this provision long term. This will enable us to continue to provide a place for your child as and when you need it and for the period that you need it. Once you complete the form, a member of staff will make contact with you to confirm the arrangements.

If your circumstances have changed and you no longer need a place in our Essential School but have previously booked a place, can you please let us know on the following email address: [adminoffice@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:adminoffice@iscaexeter.co.uk)



If your child is currently attending Essential School and you are happy for them to be tested and haven't yet completed the consent form, please follow the link here: [Lateral test consent form](#). Please complete one form for each child for which you are responsible.

We have received some lovely feedback from students attending our Essential School:

Year 7: "I have completed everything I needed to and I have understood all the work."

Year 8: "It has been easier to focus."

Year 9: "I've not been distracted with my learning and I've been more productive."

Year 10: "I think that the online calls and everything has been positive because even though there are the same amount of people in the class, you feel like it's just you and the teacher."

#### Wellbeing Support:

If you are looking for support, if your child is feeling anxious or needs someone to talk confidentially about any issue, or you are looking for things such as tips for eating healthily and exercising whilst in lockdown, then there is help available. Take a look at the Covid-19 Wellbeing Resources page on the school website <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/student-support/covid-19-wellbeing-resources> or our general page for Mental Health and Wellbeing <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/student-support/mental-health-and-wellbeing> where you will find links to many local and national organisations who can provide support for both students and their families.

#### Studio71 Online:

Studio71 Online is an arts based mental health and wellbeing programme within Google Classroom and is run by Mrs Hughes, our Studio71 Lead and Jasper Freestone, our wellbeing coordinator. It provides hundreds of resources to help ease and relieve anxiety, stress, worry and general feelings of low mood. Each week students will have access to creative challenge tasks, fun quizzes and a whole range of resources (including useful information) and strategies purely focused on improving mental health and wellbeing. Each week there is also a wellbeing quiz which provides students with the opportunity to communicate with us how they are feeling/coping and if there is any extra support they feel they need.

Studio71 sessions will also be taking place in the afternoons for a 15 minute wellbeing break between lesson 3 and 4 for year 7 and 8 students. The purpose of this is to allow students some time away from the screen and away from work and to take a moment for themselves. In this time, students will practice EFT Tapping (Emotional Freedom Technique), breathing exercises and will have the opportunity to access colour me calm and other drawing resources. It is completely risk and fail free and there is no expectation for students to produce anything specific, it is purely a wellbeing break. We encourage all students to take a wellbeing break each day, so if your child has not yet joined Studio71, please encourage them to do so.

#### Parent Information Evenings – All Year Groups

All Information Evenings for our parents will go ahead as planned under our new online format, with parents making bookings using [www.parents-booking.co.uk/isca](http://www.parents-booking.co.uk/isca) with appointments usually between 4 and 7pm.

The evening is designed to enable you to speak with individual subject teachers to review how your son/daughter is making progress and to discuss ways of working together to best support their academic and personal success.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all appointments will be made by telephone, with our teachers calling you at the appointment times booked. If you have any difficulty in making the bookings yourself then please phone the school and we can make the appointments for you. We very much value the opportunity to work with parents and do hope that you find the conversations useful.

#### Year 11 Parents - Reminder

The parents' information event for Year 11 parents will take place on **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January** between **3:30pm and 7:30pm, by telephone**. Bookings close on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 12 noon.

#### Year 10 & 9 Parents

Year 10 information evening will take place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February

Year 9 information evening will take place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February

We will notify you when the booking system is open for Year 10 and 9.

#### Free School Meal Hampers

Each week we will continue to issue food hampers to be collected from the school site for those eligible. If there is a medical reason that you or a member of your household are not able to collect the hamper, please contact the school on [fsm@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:fsm@iscaexeter.co.uk)

Collections can be made on the following days:

- **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January**
- **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January**
- **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January**
- **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February**
- **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February**

Also please arrive according to your child's year group (if you have more than one child, please use the most convenient slot from the options available to you):

- Year 7: 0900-0945
- Year 8: 0945-1015
- Year 9: 1015-1100
- Year 10: 1100-1145
- Year 11: 1145-1230

We do not have the capacity to deliver hampers to large numbers of families and so if you are able to collect them, can you please do so. We will of course be able to support small numbers of families where this is not possible.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our students for engaging with their online learning this week, I am hearing wonderful feedback about your engagement and commitment to learning.

Thank you for your unwavering support and I hope you and your family enjoy a safe and restful weekend.

Yours sincerely,



Miss Aimee Mitchell  
Headteacher