



5th January 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Ref: Update for Parents

Following my communication yesterday and the announcement by the Prime Minister last night, I wanted to update you as soon as possible with the following information.

In line with the latest government guidance we remain **open for our Essential School to vulnerable students and those of key workers only**, as previously planned and this will continue for the period of lockdown. For further information on the definition of vulnerable students and those of keyworkers, please visit the government website [here](#). For all other students, they will be required to engage with our remote learning offer until at least February Half Term. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to ensure that our offer includes not only our lessons but some of our core offer of assemblies and mental health support, as well as opportunities for rewards as we want to ensure that you and your child continue to feel connected to the school community during this difficult time.

Essential School

Now that we know that this provision will continue for the duration of the announced lockdown, can we please ask that everyone requiring a place at our Essential School completes 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.

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

Timings of the school day will remain the same as usual, with online learning in school starting at 8:45 prompt. Students need to enter the school building via their usual Year Group entrance please and they will remain in year group bubbles and static groups for the duration.

Please ensure that your child arrives at school in their full school uniform and with a face covering. PE Kit is not required. Students in Essential School will be following their timetable and the same curriculum as those at home which will be accessed via Chromebook or PC. Therefore if your child has headphones, can they please bring them to school with them to use. We can provide them if this is not possible.

Student meals will need to be booked as they normally are using the SCOPay login. Students entitled to free school meals will have their selected meal delivered to their zone at the appropriate break time. Other students will need to bring in a packed lunch or order and pay for their meal via the SCOPay app as they did before the Christmas break. The meal options will be reduced due to the limited numbers on site but we will cater for all dietary needs. The menus will be updated on the system today.

Free School Meals – Students not in school

Students not in school but in receipt of free school meals will have a food hamper provided which will need to be collected from the school site on Friday 8th January 2021. We will contact you tomorrow with a time slot.

Remote learning:

Following my letter yesterday, it is clear that our remote learning offer will now be in place for longer. All families should have received a timetable and a letter detailing our provision for remote learning and this information can also be found on our website.

We are continually reviewing our current provision and will update you with changes as and when they happen and this will be even more important now that we know the period of school closure is longer than we had first thought.

We will be consulting with our students and if you have any feedback, we would, as always welcome this. Please can I take this opportunity to let you know that we will be monitoring student engagement with online learning on a daily basis and have asked tutors to call home daily if a student is not engaging in the remote learning. We want to do everything we can to help and support students and their families at this challenging time, so please let us know if you need some support so that we can help you.

Whilst learning online, it is important that students submit their work after each lesson so that teachers can provide them with valuable feedback. If the lesson is 'live streamed', we ask students to ensure their camera and microphone are off when they join and to remain 'muted' throughout. If they have a question, they can raise a 'virtual hand' to ask a question or if they need help, they can do this through the group chat function. Equally, students should feel free to turn off this chat, if it is distracting for them.

For any questions, queries or assistance with online learning, please can I ask you to consult our website: <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/school-life/parallel-curriculum/> . This section contains help guides and email addresses if you need to contact the school directly.

Homework:

We will be expecting students to complete their daily homework from next week - w/c 11th January. This will be week 2 in their books. In our remote learning offer, we have shortened each lesson time by 15 minutes so are asking students to use this 'gained' time at the end of the day to complete their homework. Students should focus on learning the content for the week and committing this to memory. Teachers will then 'quiz' this knowledge at the start of the online lessons and use this feedback to gauge what students are mastering and where there are any misconceptions, so that these can be addressed through direct teaching. We have provided a number of strategies to help with this process which can be found in the Knowledge Organiser and on the website in the homework section. Equally, tasks will continue to be set in Sparx, Tassomai and in Quizlet, like normal.

Following our consultation on homework last term, we have made a number of changes to our homework provision which we hope you will welcome. The new policy combined with the new Knowledge Organisers (updated schedules are in the Knowledge Organiser) are available on our website: <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/students/homework/> We will also be posting these out to families over the coming days.

Examinations:

The Prime Minister announced yesterday that GCSE exams will not take place this summer '*in the normal way*'. We do not know specifically what this will mean but it seems reasonable to expect students will receive grades based on a similar system to 2020. As you might be aware this involved teachers assessing performance using class and homework, coursework, mock exam results and other evidence. However, as it stands currently, we do not know the detail of what this means and the public examinations scheduled for this January, are set to continue as planned. We are expecting updates from JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) and the DfE (Department for Education) in the coming days and as and when we get these, we will of course update you. A separate letter from me will be sent to Year 11, who will be most affected today.

Thank you, as always for your continued support and patience as we navigate these uncertain times.

Kind regards,



Miss Aimee Mitchell
Headteacher