



26th March 2020

Coronavirus: Trust Update no. 5

CURRENT SITUATION

At present, all Trust schools are remaining open for the key groups as defined by the government. It is fair to say that we are all beginning to adapt to the new “normal” and your messages and gestures of support have been very much appreciated.

Numbers across schools are fluctuating to reflect parents’ and carers’ working patterns, but we would like to thank you all for keeping your children at home whenever possible. This action remains absolutely essential in order to stop the spread of the virus.

Staff across all sites are working on a rota basis, but staying within their own schools to reduce the risk of cross infection. Each staff team is headed by a senior member of staff and there is always a designated first aider and safeguarding lead on each school site. We will endeavour to retain this position for as long as possible.

For all young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families, please find attached an open letter from Vicky Ford MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families.

STAFFING CHANGES

Many parents, carers and pupils will be aware that there were going to be some staffing changes between Trust schools with effect from April, 2020. Mrs Cook was moving from Bacton to Stowupland to lead transition and Mrs Sait was taking up the post of Executive Headteacher, overseeing both Bacton Primary and Mendlesham Primary. In order to retain as much stability as possible, these changes have been postponed. However, they will be reviewed again at May half-term and will definitely be in place for September 2020.

WORK PACKS

Some Trust schools are preparing to send out the next packs of work and we know that many of you have been able to gain access to online resources. “Show My Homework” has experienced unprecedented demand and the site crashed earlier in the week. Other online resources e.g. HegartyMaths have experienced similar issues. Hopefully, this will be a temporary “blip”, but if you have any ongoing difficulty, please contact your child’s school.

ONLINE SAFETY

With many learners now spending more time at the computer, online safety has never been more important. We are delighted to be able to provide a monthly newsletter for parents/carers with a range of practical advice and guidance which is age-appropriate. Your child's school will be able to provide the March edition and April will follow shortly. This is a new enterprise by the Trust, so we will be seeking some feedback over the coming months.

MEAL VOUCHERS

We fully appreciate that many children entitled to free school meals are presently at home. Following discussions with ASDA and Tesco, we are waiting to take delivery of gift cards which can be used by parents/carers to cover the expense of daily lunches. Gift cards will be topped-up remotely to the value of £15.00 each week and this amount has been based on the cost of a standard supermarket "meal deal" of £3.00. As soon as we receive the gift cards, they will be posted out to families.

It is our understanding that the government is working on a national voucher system, but clearly there are many priorities at present. We hope that the gift card system we have developed should be able to operate for as long as is necessary.

WARNING

The Government has warned that fraudsters are targeting parents of children eligible for free school meals. Families have received an email requesting their bank details, claiming this will enable their children to continue receiving meals through school closures amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you receive an email asking for your bank details, please delete the scam email immediately.

TRIPS AND VISITS

It is looking increasingly unlikely that there will be any trips and visits during the Summer Term 2020. This will be particularly disappointing for Year 6 children, many of whom were looking forward to a residential before they left primary school.

Wherever possible, trips will be rescheduled, but timescales are difficult to predict. We are, therefore, going to refund all deposits or monies which have been paid for Summer Term trips and visits and also reimburse parents/carers for Easter trips which have had to be cancelled (this applies particularly to Stowupland pupils).

The process may take a few weeks, but parents/carers will receive a full refund. If you have any immediate concerns or queries relating to this, please contact your child's school.

COMPETITION TIME



Design a Greetings Card!

We welcome many visitors into our schools and there are a number of occasions when we want to send them a card to say “thank you” or “we’re thinking about you”.

Our competition for learners across the Trust (Early Years through to Post-16) is to design a greetings card which is inspired either by your back garden or the view from your window.

You could choose absolutely anything: trees, animals, plants, flowers, skylines, buildings, a view of your street or your garden itself.

Your entries - black and white or colour - should be submitted on paper size A4 and include your name and the name of your school. Please send your design(s) to:

**JMAT Centre
Church Road
Stowupland
Stowmarket
IP14 4BQ**

Closing date: Thursday April 30th, 2020

There will be a prize for the winning entries and the designs selected will be professionally printed for use across the Trust.

Bacton
Primary School

Cedars Park
Primary School

Mendlesham
Primary School

Stowupland
High School

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