

VJJ/HEV

April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers



I hope that you have all managed to have some sort of break over Easter and indulged in some chocolate! I know that the current situation is a challenge for all of us and with that in mind, I think that trying to give students some sense of normality is important. The current crisis will come to an end and our school will re-open. All the staff at Caldew are looking forward to welcoming our students back. To this end, it is important the students do complete the work that has been set on the school website so that they keep up with their learning. There is also some 'just for fun' activities to try and help to make time a little more enjoyable. We have posted information on supporting your child's mental health and how to stay safe on line as well.

Carlisle Child Care Hub

Caldew has worked with Trinity, William Howard and Richard Rose Morton to set up the Carlisle Emergency Child Care Hub. This provision operates at Trinity School in Carlisle and is for the children of Key Workers, those with Education Health Care Plans and those classed as Vulnerable from all four schools. The government has asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible. If children can stay safely at home, they should. This will help limit the virus spreading, but for those students who have to attend school, we have set up the hub to ensure childcare is available. This allows us to limit the number of buildings open and minimise the risk to staff while still ensuring appropriate provision is available throughout the period of school closures. This provision has been running throughout the Easter holidays with staff from all four schools. If you qualify for emergency childcare you can request a place by emailing Carlislechildcarehub@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk

Student Work

We have seen many photographs of desks, kitchens and bedrooms turned into mini workstations, so we know the students are taking their work very seriously! As you are aware, work for all students is available on our website. To access it you click on the tab "**School Closure Work for Students**". Each Year Group's work is set out for them in subjects and the name of the class teacher. Work is also set out into weeks. Week 1 was the week beginning 23rd March and Week 2 is the week beginning 13th April. We recommend that students follow their normal timetables and complete work accordingly. In this section, there is also help and advice with any ICT issues, accessing Google Apps and on emailing. In terms of keeping fit and active there is a link entitled "**Exercising at Home**" which takes you to "The Body Coach TV" where there are plenty of sessions to keep you going!

Please note that students DO NOT have to print work out. They can write down answers and complete tasks in books or on paper. Many documents can be edited and saved – see the guidance on "Enable Editing" on our website. Students DO NOT have to send work or email it to teachers unless this is specifically requested in the instructions but they do need to keep the work for use later. If your child cannot access the internet, then please try to find other educational activities for them to do. Our Pastoral Teams are busy phoning students so please let us know if you are having any problems and we will try our best to help out.

Feedback on the work that is being set is welcomed by the department teams and individual teachers. Please do keep sending it as it is helpful – remember no one has ever worked in this way before, so it is a learning curve for us all. We are trying to strike a balance between continuing to develop skills and knowledge and allowing students to access work. I would remind parents and students alike that all staff are available during their normal timetabled lessons to answer queries and help as best they can remotely, do contact them if you are stuck!

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On the website, there is also a link to “**Online Learning for School Closure**”. This is a list of websites that are very useful for students to keep developing their knowledge and skills. We update this regularly with new links provided by companies. Often there is a cost for these but they are being provided free-of-charge during this crisis.

We also have a “**Just for Fun**” section on the website which will be updated weekly with fun activities for students to try. Our staff are busy finding things for students, staff and parents to try to keep us occupied and positive during these times. Please have a look and see if there is anything interesting!

The last section on our website page is entitled “**Mental Health and Well-Being**”. This section contains information on accessing help and support at home for anyone struggling with their mental health and well-being. It also contains some tasks and activities students can do to help them and a well-being pack which explains to students how to look after their own mental health.

One final note, we are currently facing uncertain and challenging times. As long as your child is doing their best and is happy and healthy, then that is what matters the most to us. Please do not stress about making sure everything is done or feeling that it is all just too much; we are trying our best and that is all we expect from our wonderful students and their parents!

Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG)

There is a section on the website which contains work for all students on careers entitled “**CEIAG Spring 2020**”. Please have a look and if you are in need of any advice or information; there are lots of signposts to different organisations. There is also a section for each Key Stage that provides remote work for students to complete if needed. In terms of our Year 11 and 13 students, please see the two pages attached to this newsletter or view it on the website.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact our Careers Leader: Contact: Miss Cheryl Eastburn on (01228) 710044 or Email Cheryl.Eastburn@Caldew.cumbria.sch.uk

Year 7 and 10 Reports

The reports for Years 7 and 10 are written and will be issued to parents and carers via the SIMS app once completed. You will receive a text message when they are available to read. If you do not yet have access to the SIMS app or would prefer to receive the report by email, please contact office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk to arrange this. As usual, if you have any queries about your child's report, please email the office (see above) and this will be forwarded to your child's tutor.

Free School Meals

Due to the school closures, some students were unable to access the free school meal to which they are entitled. We have therefore sent an e-voucher to support those students whilst children are unable to come to school. We will continue to do this under the national voucher scheme implemented by the government.

We are also aware that due to the current situation, many families' circumstances may be changing and many may apply for Universal Credit. Universal Credit is one of the qualifying criteria for Free School Meals and we would encourage you to apply for these for your child(ren). This can be done via Cumbria County Council's website.

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/freeschoolmeals.asp>

Please see our 'Applying for Free School Meals' guidance on the Caldew School website (<https://www.caldew.cumbria.sch.uk/popular-pages/free-school-meals-2/>)

Food Banks

If you need to access some emergency food from a food bank, you will need to get a voucher from the food bank's authorised voucher holders. Each voucher covers food supply for three days. To ask for this, you should contact Cumbria County Council's Community Support Team on 01228 221100. Please note that due to COVID 19, there is no public access to the Carlisle Foodbank. Anyone seeking help will be given instructions from the Community Support Team.

Free School Meals Scam

Some schools have reported that fraudsters are targeting parents and carers of children in receipt of free school meals. They are targeting families, emailing parents and carers with messages such as 'if your child is entitled to free school meals, send your bank details for help with funding while the school is closed'. The email contains links for parents and carers to follow if they want to receive this funding. These links are fake. This is a scam.

Support for Service Families and those in the Armed Forces Community

If you are in receipt of the SSP (confirmed by data from Cumbria Observatory), The Royal British Legion can offer support, guidance and, in some circumstances, financial assistance to families in order to meet essential needs. If you are a member of any armed forces community (any person who has served for at least 7 days or is a spouse/dependant/carer of anyone who has served), support is available. Please call the Freephone helpline 0808 802 8080, which is currently open 8:00am-8:00pm, 7 days a week.

Year 11, 12 and 13 Exam Grades

Following the decision to close schools and not go ahead with any of this summer's exams, the government has announced more details of how grades will be awarded for all qualifications for GCSE, AS, EPQ and A levels. I wrote to parents of students in Years 11, 12 and 13 two weeks ago to provide information on how this will be done. A copy of my letter can be found on the school's website.

The main points are:

- Exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.
- To produce this, teachers will be asked to take into account a range of evidence. Clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided.
- Students will not be asked to complete any new work that counts towards these teacher assessment grades.
- Schools are not allowed to share the assessment grades with students or parents/carers.
- Exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.
- These grades will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years.
- The exam boards will aim to ensure that the distribution of grades nationally follows a similar pattern to that in other years, so that this year's students are not disadvantaged.
- Students will be able to appeal their grades if they do not believe the right process has been followed.
- There will also be an option to sit exams early in the next academic year for any students who wish to – and students can also choose to sit exams next summer.

Further information can be found following this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877842/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents.pdf

Keeping in touch

Over the last couple of weeks and during the coming weeks our Pastoral Team are endeavouring to make contact with all of our parents/students to ensure wellbeing and offer support if it is needed. If your child needs support in some way, or you have any concerns then please do not hesitate to contact the team directly by email, (email addresses for the Pastoral team can be found on the Caldew School website) and they will be happy to email/phone you back as soon as they can.

Community

One of our school values is *Community* and I am very proud of the work that we are doing during this difficult time to try and support our students, parents and the wider local community. This shows that *Community* is a core value for the school and is more than just a word on a wall, it is integral to the work we do. In just the last two weeks we have:

- Contacted by phone a wide number of students, including all those with Education Health Care Plans, and their families to check that they are managing and to check on their well being.
- Organised supermarket vouchers are being sent to those families who receive Free School Meals.
- Year 11 students are being contacted about next steps to ensure that they have plans in place for September.
- 400 safety glasses from science and DT have been donated to the NHS.
- Our DT technician is using the 3D printer to make face masks.
- We have offered 400 plastic chairs to the new temporary hospital in Carlisle.
- Caldew is coordinating the Carlisle Child Care Hub as well as helping to staff this provision.

I am also aware that some staff have volunteered to help in the community by running errands or making calls to people who are self- isolating. I am very proud of the way we as a school are doing our best to support our community during this difficult time and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the staff involved.

I would like to say thank you to parents and carers for all your kind words and messages of support. It really does mean a lot to us to get this feedback.

Even though the building is closed, we are still here if you need to contact us. Please email either your child's Head of Year, a member of the school Leadership Team or myself and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Take care.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vicki Jackson
Headteacher