

Chulmleigh Community College  
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22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

## Update 2

We heard from the Secretary of State for Education on Wednesday. He has said that schools will get two weeks' notice before they reopen to all pupils. As soon as I know when we are able to open fully, I will let you know.

In College, lateral flow testing is taking place for the staff and pupils who are here and we are all working hard to make sure that your child continues to access their work.

## Keeping up with the work

I write this in light of the feedback we have had from tutor phone calls. Please do try to make us aware of any shortcomings to our offer before they become a problem.

I know that the overwhelming majority of pupils established good routines and ways of working in the last lockdown and have re-established them for this lockdown. We all know that in order to learn, effort is required. We are blessed with great teachers here, although we must realise that it is not possible to make every piece of work engaging or exciting. Some work is a hard slog – that is no different when pupils are in school.

Engagement in the last lockdown was excellent, but we were conscious that there were a group of pupils who struggled to access IT. We therefore invited them into College before this lockdown, as we believe that if a child is unable to access school work during this extended period, they need our support so their education does not suffer.

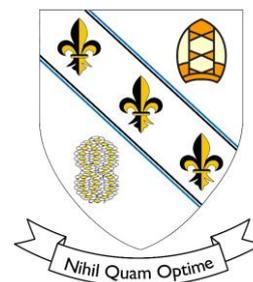
Home education is not a substitute for school and partially-open schools are unable to cover the same depth and breadth of work as fully-open schools. We have 103 pupils in College, made up of children of key workers and other children that schools are permitted to invite to attend.

Essentially, the process of learning is the same as 'adjusting' or 'changing'. To do this well, we need realistic feedback. As with the last lockdown, we are awarding both positive and negative marks on ClassCharts. We award substantially more positive marks. We think negative marks are important because we want to clearly signal to our pupils if they are falling behind or below the expectations we have of them. We allow a seven-day window for pupils to submit their work, which supports those on shared devices. If after this point work is not received, teachers will award a negative mark. Part of this process ensures that you and your child are informed. As was the case in the last lockdown, we will remove negative marks when we get to the end of this period of closure.

We believe in giving our pupils honest feedback (mindful that they are children) because this fits best with our ethos. I suspect our pupils are amongst the hardest working and tenacious in the county. We

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get the best results for a reason; our pupils understand what they need to do to improve and know how important it is that they make progress.

Negative marks on ClassCharts provide you with information you need and help our pupils to 'zero in' on what they need to do. We set the bar high here for a reason.

I am aware that as a school we have not been as consistent as we should have regarding homework. We've been overambitious about that and I would like to confirm that pupils will now be set work for a full school day only and should get no more than that. If they are thirsty for more learning, there is reading, Sparx and plenty of additional work they can fill their time with in many subjects. We will always support and endorse a pupil who wants to get ahead.

### **Good mental health**

At the end of this letter you will find details of organisations who can help you and your child(ren) during this period of lockdown (and beyond).

### **Communication**

In this lockdown, we have introduced an element of live teaching for one in every three lessons in order that our pupils can get their eyes on their teachers and listen to them, feedback and participate. One of the most difficult things about not being together is having our ability to do things together reduced. That is difficult for everyone.

As well as live lessons and live assemblies, our Facebook page has signposted sites that may help with home learning and is giving a sense of what we are all doing together. Work has been fed back thoroughly and teachers have kept in touch – phone calls from tutors to their tutees and parents have taken place to check everyone is well and managing their home learning.

We are also sending weekly updates, together with bulletins regarding safeguarding and online safety.

### **Our role in the community**

We must look at the situation we are in with a sense of perspective. When the spread of the virus reduces and the news about the pressure on the NHS and schools subsides, it is likely that we will need to look carefully at the effect this has had on communities. We are acutely aware that some families are in difficulty and we also know that the present situation in some parts of the country is significantly more challenging than here. We have an unwavering commitment to your child's education.

### **Thank you**

This situation is stretching us all, but that is not entirely a bad thing. It is a challenge or a barrier, but it's another opportunity to learn. I am utterly certain it is something which our children, staff and parents can overcome and make adjustments to. We know that when we move on from this, the hard work will continue and we welcome that – we all know that some of our best days are those days when we have had everything to do and we have done it.

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Yours faithfully

Mr M Johnson  
Executive Headteacher

Below are the details of organisations that can offer additional help to you and your child(ren):

The Children's Society

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/coronavirus...>

Young Minds

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-heop/looking-after-yourself/>

Young Minds also has a free helpline for advice for parents – 0808 802 5544 – available from Monday to Friday, 9.30am-4pm.

Think Ninja – download a free app about resilience, mental health, etc. (just search 'think ninja' to find out more). The website gives more information so that you can see if this would be useful for your child. Visit <https://www.healios.org.uk/services/thinkninja1>

Rise Above

<https://riseabove.org.uk>

Kooth – an online counselling service for young people.

<https://www.kooth.com>

See Hear Respond service from Barnados:

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/see-hear-respond>

These phone services are also available to families and young people:

- texting SHOUT to 85258
- Young Minds Crisis Messenger (text YM to 85258)
- calling Childline on 0800 1111
- calling The Mix on 0808 808 4994, or use their website at <https://www.themix.org.uk/>
- Young people aged 11-19 can text a school nurse for confidential advice and support. Text 07520 631722 for advice on issues such as relationships, bullying, mental health, self-harm, drugs or alcohol.
- If you feel that your child may be feeling depressed, your GP can refer you to specialist help.