



May 7<sup>th</sup> 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and yours are keeping safe and well during these challenging times. Many thanks to everyone who has engaged with our VE Day Challenge this week, it is wonderful to see all of your efforts on social media.

We remain enormously grateful for your continued support from home: helping with your child's education during lockdown is not at all easy. We have been really keen to get the balance right at Colmers, with your children's well-being as top priority and a quality education offer in place to support their learning. I have an update on that for you below.

I imagine that like all of us on the staff team, you are anxious to know what is planned next for schools. We will be listening carefully to announcements over this weekend and I will be in touch next week if there is any further update. In the meantime, I wish you all safe and well over the Bank Holiday weekend. School will be closed but we will monitor our [enquiries@colmers.school](mailto:enquiries@colmers.school) email address and in the event of an emergency, please do not hesitate to email me directly on [eleaman@colmers.school](mailto:eleaman@colmers.school).

- **Education for your child during COVID-19 – Getting the Balance Right**
- **Free School Meals and community food support**
- **Support if you are struggling – how we can help you**

#### **Education for your child: Getting the Balance Right**

One of the challenges for schools during this time is getting the balance right for children and parents/carers with the work we provide. Priority number one has to be the safety and well-being of you and your children. At the same time, we all know how important education is and we don't want your child's learning to suffer unduly as a result of the current situation.

As you know, our approach has been to set work daily online, with workpacks sent home for those without internet access and/or devices. We intend to continue with this approach but would value your feedback. If you do have any thoughts on what is working well and what could be even better, please do email me directly to let me know.

We know from talking to you that sometimes, it is impossible to enforce a work routine with your child. The reasons behind this can be varied and complex. The bottom line is you know your child best. While we are living through this crisis, you have to find a balance that works for you all at home. Routines can make a huge difference to young people, but endless battles are the complete opposite.

So my advice is simple: trust yourselves to find the best way through. If your child is struggling to complete the work that has been set, keep encouraging them but don't let it become a major battle ground at the expense of yours or their well-being. We will be here to help and support make up gaps when your child returns to school. The more they manage now the better - of course - but that will vary for different students and we will be here to help once we are back in school together.

### Work Pack Collection

Work packs are issued every two or three weeks. It would be enormously helpful if more students or parents/carers could collect work packs from school when they are next issued: many of you are experiencing long delays in the post getting to you and we have absolutely no control over this. If you could make a walk to school part of your daily exercise and pop in for your pack, that would be greatly appreciated. The next work packs will be prepared for Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May, please watch out for the messages that they are ready for collection!

### Free School Meals and Food Hub Support

The system for Free School Meals vouchers is now up and running. although there are still occasional issues with the DFE system. If you have any issues at all with Free School Meals, do email [FSM@colmers.school](mailto:FSM@colmers.school) and we will do our best to help. Do not forget to check your eligibility of your circumstances change so you get the support you are entitled to.

There are two wider support services able to deliver food parcels to families in need:

**South Birmingham Community Food Hub** is working in partnership with FoodCycle to distribute food parcels weekly in B29, B30, B31, B32, B38 and B45. You can find details of the group on Facebook and can ring directly on 0751413166 or 07514131667. A huge amount of work is going on to ensure food reaches families in need so do check out this opportunity if you are struggling.

**Newstarts Charity** is supporting families in the B45 and B31-35 postcodes by providing food parcels that have sufficient for 3 meals a day for all in the household. Please visit the [loverubery.com](http://loverubery.com) website and follow the link to request support.

### Support if you are Struggling

We are able to support any family that is struggling by making a referral for emergency assistance. Do please contact us – we know how difficult it can be to ask for help but now is not the time to suffer in silence.

Please contact your child's Head of Year (emails are below) or our Safeguarding and Early Help leads who will help. Alternatively, contact our school main reception on 0121 453 1778 and we will make sure the right person gets back to you as soon as possible.

Year 7: Mr Butt, [sbutt@colmers.school](mailto:sbutt@colmers.school)

Year 8: Mr Williams, [awilliams@colmers.school](mailto:awilliams@colmers.school)

Year 9: Mr Bradley, [pbradley@colmers.school](mailto:pbradley@colmers.school)

Year 10: Mrs Wilcox, [lwilcox@colmers.school](mailto:lwilcox@colmers.school)

Year 11: Mr Bennett, [abennett@colmers.school](mailto:abennett@colmers.school)

Years 12 & 13 : Mrs Thompson & Mr Love, [mthompson@colmers.school](mailto:mthompson@colmers.school) & [tlove@colmers.school](mailto:tlove@colmers.school)

Safeguarding & Early Help: Mrs Brookes, [sbrookes@colmers.school](mailto:sbrookes@colmers.school)

I hope that despite the circumstances, you manage to enjoy some quality time together over the Bank Holiday. With very best wishes to you and yours,



Emma Leaman  
Headteacher

#stayhome #staysafe #savelives