



April 17th 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families safe and well. As the lockdown now continues following the Government's announcement yesterday, I wanted to write to update you on:

- **Locality Hubs – Support for Families in Need**
- **Kooth Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health Service for Young People**
- **Food – Free School Meals and community support**
- **Colmers Virtual School & Emergency School Provision**

While school remains closed, it is more important than ever that we stay connected and you can count on our support. We know from our conversations with families that many of you are facing very challenging situations and it can be really hard to find the right help. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Please do also keep sharing some of the amazing achievements in your families during this time – a little bit of good news goes a long way at the moment!

Locality Hub Support for Families in Need

From today, new **locality support hubs** have been launched in Birmingham, bringing together a range of support services for children and families across the public and voluntary sector. The focus is on helping our most vulnerable children and families during this time. As a school, we are able to make swift referrals for support; this can be for anything from help accessing financial support to accessing wider support and early help services for your individual circumstances.

If you need help or support on any front during this time, please do contact school: either ring main reception on **0121 453 1778**, alternatively you can either **email your child's Head of Year** or use the general enquiries@colmers.school email and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Please be assured that information you share with us will be treated sensitively and confidentially; referrals will only be made with your consent.

Kooth – Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health Service for Young People aged 11-25

Kooth is a new **online counselling and support service** available to all young people aged **11-25 across Birmingham**. It has been launched by Birmingham Children's Trust. Kooth provides a safe, confidential and anonymous way for young people to access emotional wellbeing and early intervention mental health support. Kooth is widely used across the country and is well rated by young people.

Kooth is linked into the wider mental health support from Forward Thinking Birmingham and offers:

- Online **mental health counselling** and **chat** services from midday to 10pm during the week, and 6pm to 10pm at weekends
- **Peer to peer support** through moderated discussion forums
- **Self-care tools and resources** to build resilience
- **Early response to and identification** of emotional wellbeing and mental health problems
- And there are **no waiting lists**, referrals or thresholds to access the service

Your child will receive an email from school today telling them about this service.

Food

We are aware of an increasing number of families struggling with essentials including food.

Free School Meals

Many families are having to adapt at very short notice to changed circumstances. If you become eligible for Free School Meals, please register through the school web site. If in any doubt about the process, please ring school and we will be able to assist. If there is a gap before you receive your Free School Meals vouchers, we will look to access support from the Locality Hub and/or will support you directly through school where we can.

South Birmingham Community Food Hub

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.

Start of Term : Colmers Virtual School

Our virtual school starts up again on Monday morning. To help you and your children with routines, we are sticking to the **4-slot daily timetable**, with work e-mailed to students by their teachers and then available on our school portal. Students without internet access will receive a **work pack** through the post, please do let us know if you require this and have not yet been added to the work pack list.

We appreciate that students may or may not stick strictly to the timetable routine. We also know it is important they can ask staff for help or guidance when needed. Do encourage your child to **email their teacher** if they need help: this does not have to be within the timetabled slot, it can be whenever your child hits a problem with any of the work set. We do need to allow 24 hours for staff to respond so please let your child know they may need to wait to hear back from us.

There has been a fair amount in the news about the pressure on parents and carers of supporting your child to learn from home. Please do let us know if we can help in any way; it is inevitable during this time that there will be ups and downs and it is important that your **family well-being takes priority**.

Colmers Emergency School Provision

Our in-school provision remains open to the small number of students who need to be in school, either because they are children of Key Workers or because of very specific family situations that require that support. If your circumstances have changed and you need to access this provision, for example you are taking up work as a Key Worker, please contact school reception and we can make the necessary arrangements. We are committed to supporting all families that need this provision but must stick to the government guidance that only those students for whom it is absolutely essential should be in school.

With very best wishes to you and yours,



Emma Leaman
Headteacher

#stayhome #staysafe #savelives