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Richard Brand: Headteacher

8<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you all, once again, for all the support you are giving your sons and daughters at home over the last week. We understand how challenging life is at the moment, as we juggle long-term learning at home with the natural implications this has on our mental health and positivity. To help remind students that we are still here as part of a socially-distanced community and that we can't wait to welcome them back into school, we have been working hard behind the scenes to produce a video which we hope will raise a smile. You can find this on the school's YouTube site as well as via the Twitter feed and we sincerely hope that everyone is reminded of the strength of our community in these difficult times.

Staff have been pleased to see you rewarding your children at home for their efforts with school work via the Class Charts buttons; we really are over the moon to see so many young people committing to their studies and achieving such good work. Currently, you have awarded over 160 positive points, please continue to do this using the Parental Reward buttons which cover both academic work and also effort seen outside the "home classroom", eg supporting others at home, looking after their own physical and mental health etc.

We work closely with an organisation called Teach First, and Mrs Smith has been successful in obtaining 75 Amazon tablets for the school. As soon as these are processed, we will be loaning these to students struggling to access online resources and families who have more than one sibling needing to use the device. We are hoping that this will mean all our students then have the ability to work remotely and to be able to communicate with staff more frequently. If you think that access to such a device as a loan would help support you and your child, please email [info@thedeanacademy.org](mailto:info@thedeanacademy.org) to register an interest and we will try to respond to you in the next week to discuss this.

As the time we have spent in lockdown continues to grow, we are becoming increasingly aware of the financial impact on families within our school community. The Free School Meals vouchers scheme was upgraded last weekend and the new vouchers for the next two weeks should have arrived with you this week. We have already ordered the next round of vouchers, so that we have no delays in issuing them. Thank you to the parents who have been in contact regarding problems with them, please continue to inform us if you have an issues so that we can try to liaise with the company to redeem them. If your code fails, please contact Mr Mooney by email [declan.mooney@thedeanacademy.org](mailto:declan.mooney@thedeanacademy.org) and we will get you a replacement code that works.

The Government have issued new guidance for schools in England to provide support for children now at home, who were previously in receipt of benefits related free school meals. **You may not have been eligible for the Free School Meal scheme in the weeks before national lock down. However, if your personal circumstances have changed then we urge you to contact us and we can support you through this process because you could now be eligible due to current circumstances. This**



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**will allow you to claim vouchers under the National Voucher Scheme.** Your child might be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

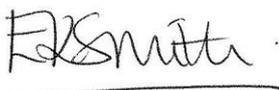
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

As we enter an uncertain weekend with rumors abound of the government's intention to review lockdown procedures, please can we reassure you that we have started to look at how we can safely return and have a number of plans in place to ensure this happens smoothly, whenever we are informed. We have already developed a series of protocols for students and staff to ensure they are safe and to limit the risk returning to school brings with it. These plans are all in line with guidance from Public Health England. As soon as we are informed by the government of plans to reopen schools, we will communicate these with you.

Finally, can we please also remind you of the support offered on the school's website regarding mental health, online safety and family life. We update this regularly with any changes to local services and would be happy to discuss any possible support which you might need via the email given above. Please see the attached flyer as an example of this support.

Thank you all, again, for everything you are doing to support the continuation of our school community; we hope that you all stay safe and get to enjoy the sunshine over the bank holiday weekend while following all necessary social distancing guidance.

Best wishes,



**Emily Smith**  
Acting Headteacher



**Declan Mooney**  
Acting Headteacher

[EKS/DBM/TW-parent update-080520](#)

