

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer and Students of Ely College

Yesterday's announcement of another extended period of national lockdown will be difficult news for many of us.

From tomorrow, the vast majority of students will need to undertake online learning at home as part of a national lockdown in response to a surge in COVID-19 and a new variant in the virus. This situation will remain in place until further notice but is expected to last until at least February half term. Government guidance on [this can be found here](#).

There are two immediate priorities for our school community this week: ensuring the well-being of every child alongside their access to high-quality remote learning and providing those students who are due to take crucial examinations this summer with the information and support they will need.

Students and families in Year 11 and Year 13 will be concerned about the arrangements for the summer exams. I am truly sorry not to be able to provide you with the certainty and answers that you will want and deserve today. The government have not yet released details of what adjustments they intend to make to the summer exams – but I am confident this will follow soon. It is important that each of you understand that **we will continue to deliver the curriculum and prepare you for whatever type of assessment that will be used to award your qualifications. Your school year has not ended, and your lessons will continue.** Last year the move to centre assessed grades from mock exams and other assessments really caught out some exam students. We had numerous messages to the effect of, if I had known they mattered, I would have worked harder. You must not be tempted to ease back with your effort or application. We are sure that the exam boards will give us guidance soon on how the grades will be awarded and if you will be required to sit informal assessments. We are also pressing ahead with plans to hold the March mock exams for year 11 students – you **MUST** prepare for these as fully as possible.

We were due to send home reports to Year 11 at the end of this week. These will be slightly delayed while we complete plans for remote learning and consider any updates from the government about assessment in the summer. I will update you with regard to this and the plans we have for tutor time and how we intend to track engagement of remote learning in this Friday's bulletin.

As we had always planned, we will be open to supervise the children of critical workers and vulnerable children from tomorrow (6<sup>th</sup> January 2021). The criteria for eligibility for this provision [can be found here](#). I wrote to you before Christmas to invite those eligible to sign up for a place in this provision. It is important to point out that students attending school will be supervised by staff in following the remote/online learning offer while in school - they will not receive face to face lessons from teachers. Students attending this provision will have access to school catering, but this will be of a limited, reduced nature. We expect some school transport to continue to run, but this will be much more limited (further details will follow). If you have not already done so, please can you sign up to secure a place [using this form](#). Parents or carers requesting a place can assume that

they will be able to access it unless they hear from us. The provision will run from 8.30am – 3.00pm tomorrow. Students should report to main reception.

If you are in any doubt about whether your child is eligible to attend school, or if you are worried about how your child will access remote lessons, please contact your child's House office for advice and support. Alternatively, please email [office@elycollege.co.uk](mailto:office@elycollege.co.uk) and we will respond as soon as possible.

From tomorrow (Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January) lessons will run remotely and live, following the usual timetable, over MS Teams. Wherever possible, remote learning will be live, with the timetabled teacher delivering lesson content or instructions to students. Sessions may not necessarily be 'live' for the full hour, and students may well be asked to continue work independently and off-line once instructions have been given. Where a teacher is absent or unwell, recorded content or instructions may be left for students to undertake. Most students and families are now familiar with this process, but guidance and support can be found on our website: <https://www.elycollege.com/remoteteaching>

We are in a very different position to March 2020. We know that this period of partial closure is likely to be more limited, and with the vaccination programme we can expect to see a return to more normal provision as we enter the Spring. We are also ready and able to transition to online delivery much more rapidly and effectively. While it will never be the same as being in school, we have learned many lessons from 2020 and I expect everyone's experience to be much more dynamic and effective. We also want to ensure that your child's welfare and well-being is protected. Ever since March 2020, we have maintained an open email address: [worried@elycollege.co.uk](mailto:worried@elycollege.co.uk) for students and parents to contact us if they are anxious or worried during lockdown. We have a range of resources and advice to help [support your well-being on our website](#), and our student support staff and House teams remain ready and available to support you with your learning and your general progress. You are not alone – the college is open and online for you. Your teachers, teaching assistants and support staff will be making regular contact with you.

In so many ways our community has been brought closer together over the last year. I am confident that we can all navigate this next period effectively. We will be in touch regularly in the coming days with updates and to share as much good news and positivity as possible!

Please accept my very best wishes to you all at this difficult time.

Yours faithfully



Simon Warburton  
Principal