

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As we reach the end of a virtual half term, I hope that this finds you and your family safe and well. Just a few updates before we finish for a week:

### **School remains open for key groups of pupils including key workers' children**

School will remain open throughout half term and beyond for the children of key workers and for others whom the government has identified as priority groups. Numbers remain low but we are proud to support critical workers to carry on with their jobs.

### **The wider reopening of school for Year 10 pupils**

There has been much debate in the press about this, but little detail. Secondary schools are yet to receive guidance from the DfE about their expectations for what we should offer to Year 10 and what conditions we must meet to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. Until we receive this guidance, we cannot make any concrete plans and so we find ourselves in limbo waiting for information. It is likely that when we are eventually able to have more pupils in school, there will be very few in at any one time; there will certainly be no reopening to the whole year group. As soon as I am able to do so, I will be in touch with our plans. Thank you for your patience and understanding with this.

### **Learning from home**

We have now had several school weeks of this brave new world of online/home learning and will now take stock of how that has gone and how we can improve it. After half term, we are aiming to improve the flow of work issued to pupils so that they don't feel overwhelmed with a barrage of emails and tasks and can organise themselves better. We are also developing our systems to enable some tutorials from our staff and some interactive feedback sessions. Please bear in mind that we are learning too ... we've never had to do this before and have not had the technical kit or capacity to do this yet – we are working to change that. Staff are keen to have better interaction with pupils and we will be trialling this after the break. We will be asking pupils for their feedback too to help us improve.

Just a reminder that teachers will not be setting work or dealing with pupils' queries during half term.

### **Free School Meals**

Our voucher system is now established and, despite the Government refusing to fund free meals over the half term break, we will be doing so. As home circumstances change in these turbulent times, you may find that you are now eligible to apply for free school meals for your child – more information is available at

<https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-tameside>. **Advance notice – schools are not funded for free school meals during the summer break and so no vouchers will be issued for this period from July 17<sup>th</sup>.** The Local Authority has asked that we share the following information to help parents make the most of their free school meal vouchers:

Our Children's Nutrition Team has put together cooking tips and affordable recipes that will make the £15 vouchers stretch further. These include weekly planners and a shopping list for five lunches costing £15 and have meal and recipe ideas that can be made with the items bought. The aim is to help more people to eat healthily, make the most

out of their ingredients, and cut back on spending on the food shop whilst keeping a balanced diet. Live cooking demonstrations are also available at [www.biteback2030.com/real-story/cook-jack](http://www.biteback2030.com/real-story/cook-jack). There are more details in a press release [here](#) and the resources can all be found at [www.tameside.gov.uk/healthyeatingandnutrition/kids/budget](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/healthyeatingandnutrition/kids/budget).

### **Emails to all pupils**

Each year group has received an email from me today with updates relevant to them. Further to the staff video released last week (not quite ready for Strictly Come Dancing are we?!), Mrs Poole has emailed all pupils with details of a new project – Hyde's Got Talent. She has invited all pupils to share clips of their own skill/talent and these will be used to create a compilation of the fabulous things our pupils can do. This will be shared via our social media links and so please talk to your child if you would prefer them not to submit a clip.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

We are very aware of the potential impact of prolonged social isolation on our pupils and the pressures of home learning on families and so we have a growing set of resources and information on our website for parents and children (within the section called 'Information during closure'). Our helpline [help@hydecc.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:help@hydecc.tameside.sch.uk) will be checked throughout half term and is available to all pupils. Whilst we're not 'in school', we are still here for all our pupils.

### **Eid Mubarak**

To all of our families celebrating Eid al-Fitr this weekend, we wish you a very happy and peaceful Eid with your loved ones.

My heartfelt thanks for all your support with home learning, I know it's not easy and as parents we can only do our best. My thanks to our staff too for all their hard work in exceptional circumstances; I am blessed to work with such a committed and talented team.

Have a lovely half term and I will be in touch in June. Keep safe.

With best wishes,



Andrea Radcliffe  
Headteacher