



'Investing in Individuals, Transforming Lives'

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Executive Principal: Michelle Wilman
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Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you are all keeping well and safe during these most unprecedented times. We are really missing all our fantastic children and young people and I am sure like me you can't wait for normality to return. My apologies for the length of this letter, but there are a few things to cover. If you find it difficult to access this much text, please ask the member of staff who rings you this week to explain its content.

Staff contact:

As a school we have committed to give you a weekly phone call to check in with you and see how your child and your family are all doing. Often this will be a No User ID call. Please do not feel we are checking up on you, to see how much work your child has done. The work is there to support you if you want it, and if you need more please do feel free to ask for more, but if you haven't used it at all, that isn't a problem. Fortunately the weather is still great and there are lots of great outdoor activities that our children enjoy that can keep them occupied and learning. If you haven't got a garden and you are struggling stuck in the house, please let us know. If you are having any other difficulties, please do not hesitate to tell us, we may be able to offer more support than we are doing already. The school office is manned every day and even if you don't get an answer, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as is possible.

When will school reopen for my child?

As you will be aware from the media there is lots of speculation about when lockdown will end and when and how schools will re-open properly. We have no more knowledge than you at the moment, but once we do we will let you know. It is becoming clearer that social distancing will continue to be a priority for some time into the future and you will understand how difficult that can be to maintain for some of our children.

We have been working closely with Leeds City Council Health and Safety, the other SILCs across Leeds and the NHS and we have developed an agreed safe way of working. For those pupils who are attending school at the moment, we now have access to PPE equipment helping to keep our children and the staff as safe as we can.

Preparing for a change in routine for our children and young people is really important and we will talk to you and listen to your suggestions when the time comes to return. We are really conscious that our year 14 students will be leaving in July to move to new provision from September. Many of these pupils have been in our school for a very long time and those goodbyes (as well as the best transition to their new provision) is very important to all of us. We will do our best somehow to make this work, within the restrictions we face.

Free school meals

We have now moved over to Edenred system run by the government. The email with the redemption code finally arrived last weekend.



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The redemption code is only valid for 4 weeks from the point of issue – after that each supermarket may have different terms and conditions as to when the voucher expires. Edenred have some frequently asked questions - <https://www.edenred.co.uk/reward-recipients/Free-School-Meal-Vouchers/>, you will find these on our website alongside this letter – this may give further clarification.

The vouchers we have ordered cover 4 weeks until Friday 8th May - £15 a week = £60. If you have two children at school entitled, then you will only receive one email this time but the redemption value will be £120. Further vouchers will be ordered the week before these are completed if needed.

If you have any difficulties either:

- Still haven't received an email from Edenred
- using the redemption code to get the voucher – which will come again by email
- when you try to use them at the supermarket

Please let us know and we will see if we can help in anyway.

Food

- How are you coping – are you able to access the shops?
- Are you too anxious to go to the shops? We have recently found out that some families haven't used their FSM vouchers as they aren't going out.
- Do you need some support with shopping? There are volunteers across Leeds doing shopping for people who have undertaken social isolation for 12 weeks. We can put you in touch with them to help you if necessary.
- Whilst we don't want to pry into your family's financial situation, this may have change at the moment – you may now for example be eligible for free school meals, especially if you are in the process of claiming universal credits.
- As part of our school meal service we are to access weekly food parcels for families who are particularly struggling at the moment.

If you are having any issues with accessing food or having enough to feed your family during these difficult times, when the member of staff rings, please let them know and we will see if we can support in anyway.

Annual reviews

If your child has an EHCP Annual Review coming up, you should have already received a letter asking you to choose how you would like this meeting to go ahead. Many of our parents are happy to receive a copy of the EHCP by email/ post and review the EHCP plan over the phone. You may wish to join the meeting via Zoom or Microsoft Teams – and we are happy to support with this. It is highly likely that social distancing measures will continue, even when the lockdown has been lifted; therefore postponing the meeting until a later date should only be an option when there are other extenuating circumstances e.g. illness

Wellbeing and behaviour

Our weekly phone calls to parents have found that most parents and carers are as resilient as ever in this crisis and managing the situation very skilfully. As the lock down continues, you may find that the challenge becomes ever greater. Please don't hesitate to contact school if you need support or advice. The services below are just a small selection of what is available in the area:

Scope Navigate service: Navigate is a national mentoring service, that provides online emotional support for parents and carers of disabled children who are finding out about their child's additional needs. <https://www.scope.org.uk/family-services/navigate/>

Parents can self-refer for sleep support, practitioners are working flexibly to meet needs <https://www.scope.org.uk/family-services/sleep-right/sleep-right-application-form/>

Parents Connect and Activities for All are running some online workshops for parents, presently subjects are on behaviour and emotional resilience but more to come. Parents Connect are also trialling online coffee mornings; contact Louise for more details and do see the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ActivitiesLeeds/> for most up to date details.

If you need help in any other way, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please take care and stay healthy. Hope to be able to see all our children and young people soon, we are all missing you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Wilman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Michelle Wilman
Executive Principal