

Orchard Manor School  
John Nash Drive  
Dawlish  
Devon EX7 9SF



24<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well.

Last week, it was announced that lockdown would continue for another three weeks. However, we are aware that lockdown could be extended beyond this. We will continue to keep you updated with the latest guidance and announcements. At this point, there is no plan for school buildings to reopen to pupils, however we are planning how Orchard Manor could reopen and what this could look like when we are able to. It is vital that we support a transition back into school for our pupils that is as smooth as possible.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the different way in which we are having to work. We are following all government guidance to minimise the transfer of Coronavirus. Our staff team is reduced as some of our staff have required to self-isolate due to displaying symptoms or being classed as vulnerable. We are pleased to confirm that staff displaying symptoms will now be able to access testing.

### **Government Guidance**

The overarching message from government remains the same. **The safest place to be is at home.**

To support with the management of the Coronavirus outbreak and to maintain the health safety and wellbeing of our whole school community our school buildings remain closed to all but;

- children of essential key workers who absolutely cannot make other childcare arrangements and
- a very small number of our most vulnerable young people (families of these pupils will be contacted individually)

The only young people who will be allowed into school are those where individual arrangements have been agreed by myself.

### **Distance Learning**

Although our school buildings are shut to the vast majority of our young people, we continue to provide education to all our pupils. Just because our school buildings are mainly shut and we are having to work differently, we are still very much here for you. Online learning resources are being updated regularly and staff will continue to be in contact with you at least weekly.

Throughout this extraordinary period when many of our young people are not attending school, there is a need to maintain positive and regular communication with all our pupils and their families. The many reasons for this include maintaining positive relationships with pupils, checking on their wellbeing, ensuring they are able to access the educational opportunities that are available to them and to offer pastoral support. It is hoped that our continued contact with pupils will ease their eventual transition back into school. We appreciate your support in enabling us to do this.

Tutors are providing resources for our pupils for distance learning. These include online activities and resources. Your child's tutor will continue to provide work and resources. If you feel your child needs further resources or activities please contact your child's tutor. Similarly if your child is struggling to access activities and resources please contact your child's class tutor. Some staff are beginning to video conference with pupils. There is a Tip Sheet to help your child access Teams which is preferred method of video conferencing with your child. This has been emailed to you and is also on our website:

<https://www.orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=2280&type=pdf>

As pupils are using the internet regularly at the moment please be aware of the guidelines for internet safety. We have advice to support you on our website which you can access by clicking on the following link: <http://orchardmanor.ng3.devwebsite.co.uk/page/?title=Keeping+Your+Child+Safe+Online&pid=233&action=saved>

There is also some very helpful government guidance that is available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead, James Watson, and Depute Safeguarding Lead, Rachel Addison, are available to provide further support around online safety and can be contacted by email: [jwatson@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:jwatson@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk) and [raddison@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:raddison@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk)

### **Government announcement to support online learning**

On Sunday 19 April, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson announced support for vulnerable, disadvantaged children and young people who do not have access to a digital device during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The announcement states that laptops and tablets will be available for the most disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access. This will include:

- Care leavers
- Children with a social worker (including pre-school children)
- Children in Year 10, ahead of GCSEs next year who do not have a social worker and do not have the means to access a laptop or tablet.
- 16 to 19-year-olds without a suitable device may also be eligible for support via a separate funding stream. This will be confirmed as soon as further guidance is issued.

Note: Schools, parents and pupils will not be able to order the devices themselves. Local authorities will work with schools to identify care leavers and children with a social worker who need devices. Local authorities are responsible for managing distribution to children and young people, liaising with schools where appropriate.

What other support is being offered?

The government have also pledged to provide 4G routers/dongles to make sure disadvantaged secondary school pupils and care leavers can access the internet – where those families do not already have mobile or broadband internet in the household.

We are waiting for further confirmation and guidance on how all of this support can be accessed, and what the time frames are for devices and services being made available. We will update you as soon as more information becomes available.

**Free School Meals**

We have sent out all our vouchers for those pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals. If you haven't received a voucher and you feel you should have please contact: [rschofield@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:rschofield@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk)

The next vouchers will be sent out and will be for the 3 weeks up to Friday 8th of May. We will send vouchers out electronically until school returns to normal using the government recommended Edenred site.

**My Hero is You**

*My Hero is You* is an illustrated story about how Covid-19 is affecting children today. Compiled by children, parents and carers from 104 different countries, it explores many of the issues facing children and helps them to understand the current situation. It is suitable for primary school age understanding, but is a great read for all ages. Please note the book refers to a 1 metre social distancing rule, but in the UK it is recommended 2 metres. Overall an enjoyable book that will help develop understanding and can be found here: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>

We will continue to provide you with regular updates whilst this challenging period continues. Please reach out if you need any support and we will do as much as we can to support you remotely. We appreciate your ongoing support and patience, and we hope that we will be welcoming our pupils back into school in the not too distance future.

Best wishes,

Mark Rose  
Executive Principal