



# ORMISTON DENES ACADEMY

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29th January 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

As you may know, on Wednesday the Government suggested schools would not open (properly) until at least the 8th March 2020. This is disappointing for all of us and I imagine has caused many differing reactions from you and your children. So I would like to take a moment to thank you for all the support and time you are putting into your child's education. Make no mistake, it is tough at the moment for everyone, especially yourselves as parents of children who should be in school. The feedback from staff is that you are doing a fantastic job and your child is benefiting from your help. So well done.

During these difficult times as well as ensuring their ongoing education is as best as it can be, it is also important to look after their welfare and we are doing this through weekly drop-in sessions where students can have a chat or ask questions with their pastoral manager. However, we are also committed to supporting the welfare of you. With this in mind, we will be holding **year group parent welfare video meetings** with your child's year head, pastoral manager and our SENDCo.

The sessions will be held as follows:

- Years 9 and 10 Monday 8th February 3.15 - 4.15pm
- Years 7 and 8 Tuesday 9th February 3.15 - 4.15pm

If you wish to attend and/or have any specific questions, please email [info@ormistonden.co.uk](mailto:info@ormistonden.co.uk) by 11am on Thursday 4th February to receive your invitation to these sessions.

Following the latest Public Health guidance, there is a change to the response following any positive (in school) **lateral flow test**. A positive case will now automatically trigger a period of self-isolation (rather than taking a confirmatory PCR test). The start of the isolation will commence from the date of the positive lateral flow test or the first day of symptoms. This change will not be amended on the current consent form, however if this does change your consent opinion, please contact the school via [info@ormistonden.co.uk](mailto:info@ormistonden.co.uk).

The Year 9 students are about to start their process of choosing their options for study throughout Year 10 and 11. This is an important and exciting process for the students and I know you will want to support them fully in their choices for the future. This year, we are producing an electronic version of the options booklet, you will be able to look through at home. Instead of a **Year 9 Options Evening** this year, on Thursday 4th February we will be launching our virtual options event, where videos and information about all the courses will be on the website for you to view and understand.

We have now moved over to the national **free school meal** voucher scheme, Edenred. The order was processed on Thursday and eligible parents should have already received an email inviting them to select their supermarket of choice. This voucher covers free school meal replacements up until February half term. Suffolk County Council will also be funding a one-week voucher for the week of half term which will be distributed nearer the time. This



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will come via Wonde but we will send out a reminder to parents once we have a clearer idea of the schedule. If you have any issues claiming your vouchers, please do not hesitate to call or email the academy.

On Monday 2nd February at 3.15pm, we are holding a **live careers event for Year 9 mathematicians**. Laura Davies, our NEACO HE Champion loves maths and will be with us to share why maths is her world – from code breaking to launching rockets to Mars these are just 2 of the places that maths can take you after school. We invite Year 9 students to think of a good related question for Laura, because the best question will win a prize and all those who attend will receive 5 reward points. The session will be held on Google Meet. Please email our Careers Advisor, Mrs Budgen at [cbudgen@ormistonden.es.co.uk](mailto:cbudgen@ormistonden.es.co.uk) to receive your invitation.

In support of **National Mental Health Week**, we are very excited that fashion, beauty and lifestyle influencer Sophie Hannah Richardson will be joining us virtually, for a range of tutorial led sessions with the opportunity to discuss the pressures of social media and being comfortable in your own skin. There will be an option for all students to join at least one session if they would like, and may be a particular interest for our Key Stage 4 students who are looking to join the beauty industry on leaving the academy. More information will be shared with students over the coming days.

At present, there are a lot of big issues and concerns, but I personally think it is important that we don't forget that little things can make a difference too. When Robert, my youngest son who is now 28, was very young he had a cuddly toy called 'Cedric'. Cedric was an elephant and Robert took him everywhere; and I mean everywhere. Over the months and years, Cedric got more and more tattered but that just seemed to add to his charm. Robert loved him. The thing about Cedric was this. He couldn't see, he couldn't talk, he couldn't move but he had one crucial quality; he was always there for him. If for some reason we couldn't find Cedric, you would see fear and panic in our eyes. Once we left Cedric in a café and as soon as we realised – I think it was Robert's screams that gave us a clue – we immediately turned the car round and drove back to get him.

Sometimes as a parent, just being there is all that is needed. Your child may not say anything to you, but they know you are there for them. When they are struggling with some work or having some personal difficulties, a look that simply says "I'm here for you" can be enough. In this world of remote learning and virtual meetings, it is all too easy to lose the small signs of appreciation but there is one place where it can still happen: at home. So, thank you again for all your support. Enjoy the company of your children and although they may not always voice their appreciation, it is there. And remember Cedric, as just 'being there' is often all that is needed.

Have a good weekend and stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Jim Nixon  
Principal