



King  
Egbert  
School

Celebrating 50 years of King Egbert School  
1969-2019

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**Headteacher:** Mr Paul Haigh  
**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Karen Milbourn

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Our Ref: PHA/HW

Dear Parents and Carers

I know many of you are watching my YouTube assemblies and thank you so much for the kind comments about my simple efforts. Also, we appreciate all the kind words about our approach to keeping school running online and the skeleton school at KES for a small number of vulnerable and key workers' children. However, I thought it was time I wrote you directly more formally.

Although this crisis has been going on since the start of March it is worth remembering, excluding the holiday, we have only been closed for 3 weeks. Firstly I'd like to pay tribute to all the staff at King Egbert and Mercia Trust who have got our Virtual School up and running so quickly- not only for learning but the caring pastoral work and the back office team dealing with items such as payroll and organising free school meals vouchers. Far from last can I thank the IT team making it all possible.

Secondly I'd like to thank you and your children for working so hard. I can see about 80% of students are engaging really well in our online learning which is truly impressive when you consider the stresses we are all under.

I know from our contact with families that the virus is starting to take some of our loved ones and I would like to offer my sincere condolences. The bereavements you are suffering are all the more cruel without the chance to be with friends and families and commemorate lives in the normal way.

Let me get to business;

### 1) Ramadan

This is always a special time of year in our community and I am so sorry our Muslim families cannot spend time with wider family and visit the Mosque like normal. I hope the month of prayer and reflection allows you to draw strength from your faith at this challenging time and I wish you a peaceful and holy month.

### 2) Edulink and work overload

Our Edulink tool is designed for setting fairly simple homework tasks and we really are broadening it by running a whole curriculum through the system. We have asked teachers to use a simple and common labelling of tasks so hopefully it will get easier to make sense of what needs doing. Students can organise the big list of work with the tabs at the top so they can sort it by subject and then check their timetable and pick up the work easily for that subject and ignore the rest of it for that hour.



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We are also aware that it is hard to judge how much work we should be posting up. Overloading learners is a real concern and we know some are spending too long working and others feeling overwhelmed and do not know where to start. Remember what I keep saying on YouTube, it's about routine- working between 9am and 3pm with the normal breaks and using your timetable to guide you what you should do each day.

I'm having meetings with staff next week to look at our curriculum model and make sure the workload is manageable for students and teachers. Please just keep encouraging your child to stick to a healthy routine and do what they can in line with their timetable.

### **3) Office 365- Team and Stream**

On top of using Edulink and Moodle and me popping up on YouTube we will start using more features of Office 365 with students that they can all access online. That is already where they can email their teachers on Outlook but we are starting to deliver live lessons to some classes in Year 10 and 12 on video via conferencing technology on Teams. This can be accessed from a smart phone, tablet or just download the free Teams app and sign in with their school email and password. Live lessons are recorded and can be watched back so if they are missed do not worry, but it is better to be there and join in.

Similarly more videos we make will go live there on the Stream tool. The Heads of House are already on there giving more 'shout outs' to amazing students than I can fit into my weekly YouTube video. Please be assured only King Egbert staff and students can access what we do on Teams and Stream so it is very safe. All staff have received training on safe guarding protocols. I'll keep using YouTube to parents and other family members are welcome to watch too.

### **4) Calls home and support**

The pastoral team are doing a wonderful job phoning and emailing 100s of families a week to check in where we know you may sometimes need extra support. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if your family are struggling, particularly with your children's well-being or their ability to do school work. The DfE are providing laptops for some Year 10s and Mercia Trust have plans to buy more laptops and 4G connections for families who are in crisis. We'll contact you if you meet the eligibility criteria to see if you would benefit when we have them, please do not contact us as we are working on a very limited capacity in school and deliveries will take time.

I'm well aware that in this stressful time families who normally don't need much help from the pastoral team might benefit from contact as circumstances have changed so I'm recruiting more KES staff to volunteer to call more families to check children are safe and well. If you get a call the caller's number may be withheld as staff may be using their own phone but please know it's likely to be us.

### **5) The future- opening back up**

I have to say whilst none of us know the detail it is clear it will be a long time before our lives and school returns to normal. School will be closed for some time and when it is safe to open it could well be there are serious restrictions on numbers in the building. We are working on models that prioritise exam groups and induction of new students first and look at a blended learning approach of virtual and face to face lessons so that social distancing rules are observed. It's too early to give any details or dates but I wanted you to know we are planning for a range of options. Please be assured that caring for the vulnerable and maximising everyone's learning are the priorities.

My next YouTube video will be out on Tuesday morning so log in to see me after you've done your Joe Wicks exercise! We are also posting lots of content of the school's Facebook page including some fantastic photographs of students' work, go and see if your child's work is up there.

Yours faithfully



**Mr P Haigh**  
**Headteacher**