

# Viking Academy Trust

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Dear Viking Parents/Carers

## Viking Academy Trust: Easter Update

First and foremost, we miss you all! As we approach the Easter bank holiday weekend, I wanted to write to stay in touch with our Viking families and share updated information with you. I hope you are keeping safe and adhering to the government's advice around social distancing, it is of course, in all of our best interests to follow the advice if we are to stem the flow of the virus.

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March seems such a long time ago – the date we closed our gates and temporarily said 'goodbye' to life at Chilton, RAPS & Upton as we know it. For all of us, life has taken a very different path, with 'Home Learning' and 'Social Distancing' phrases that are now very much part of our vocabulary.

Our schools remain open with the sole purpose of providing childcare for the children of 'key critical workers' and our most vulnerable children in order for frontline services to continue at a time of national emergency. I am hugely grateful to Miss Arthur, Mr Budge & Mrs Law and their staff teams for their willingness to put aside their personal circumstances to provide this essential service for their local community.

This afternoon we close our doors once again, but only across the Easter bank holiday weekend. We open once again on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> for the final two days of the holiday before we enter 'Phase 3' of our partial opening, the start of Term 5. In terms of attempting to put a timescale on when we will resume school life as 'normal', I am very sorry but this is something I do not have an answer to at the moment. Please believe me, we long to return to normal and have our children back filling our empty schools with laughter and learning! We await the government's announcement that it is safe to open once again for everyone – and that day will come, just not yet. So, for now, we plan for term 5 and our virtual Viking schools...

**'Phase 3' Term 5 Partial Opening:** 'Key worker' parents have been asked to complete an 'expression of interest form' and return these by 12<sup>th</sup> April. I shall share information regarding the details of the childcare provision Viking will be able to offer our Key Worker families on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions in the meantime.

For the majority of children and families that will be 'Home Learning' for the start of term 5, each school will share new updates with you ready for the first day of term. Your Head of School will be your main point of contact if you have any questions regarding this.

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**FREE SCHOOL MEALS:** We have communicated with families currently in receipt of free school meals and have also shared with all Viking families the information required to apply for free school meals. (Please see the school website for further information). I strongly advise families to complete the application if any of the reasons below apply to you:

## 'One Childhood, One Chance'



Chilton Primary School, Ramsgate Arts Primary School and Upton Junior School are operated by Viking Academy Trust which is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 09449979. The Registered Office is at Chilton Primary School, Chilton Lane, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 0LQ. Viking Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- 1) You have a child in Year R, 1 or 2 that receives universal infant free school meals\* but could meet the threshold for Free School Meals (FSM) application
- 2) You have a child in Year R, 1 or 2 that receives universal infant free school meals\* and another child in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6 that receives Free School Meals.
- 3) Recent circumstances have changed your financial situation and therefore you may now meet the criteria to be in receipt of Free School Meals.

\*Please note: Universal Infant Free School Meals is a nationwide government initiative. EVERY child of infant school age is in receipt of this. It is different from Free School Meals (FSM). An application must be completed for you to receive FSM.

The reason I am urging you to ensure your details are as up to date as possible is due to the government's announcement to support families at this time by launching a **national voucher** scheme for all families in receipt of Free School Meals.

**National Vouchers...** will amount to £15 per child, per week for the foreseeable future. These will be shared via an 'ECode' using the email address we have on our database for you. It is therefore vital the school has your correct email address. If you haven't yet confirmed this with us, then please do so today. Information was first sent out to you on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Our finance team is currently in the process of organising the vouchers and will share information with families that are registered for free school meals. Please note, it isn't too late to apply – once your application has been confirmed, you will be included in the voucher list.

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For now, I wish you and your family a very happy Easter weekend. The weather looks set to be the best it has been and hopefully the sunshine will help to lift the spirits of us all. We may not be celebrating the holiday in the way we had planned to, but I do hope you are able to enjoy family time together, safe and well.

Remember to join the 'Clapfourcarers' at 8pm this evening. I shall be in my front garden with my saucepans in hand and tears in my eyes!

Keep yourself, your friends and family safe.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require our support.

With my warmest wishes



Michaela Lewis

Executive Headteacher



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