

## **Felsted School update: Wednesday 1st April 2020**

I hope that the start of the Easter holiday has gone well for you. I am sure that most of you are facing particularly difficult circumstances, with limited movement, while being unable to see family and friends.

I wanted to update you on a few important issues that will have an impact as we go into the Summer Term. We have not been told officially that schools will remain closed into next term, but it is increasingly unlikely that we will be open for normal operation on 21st April, so we are planning on continuing with Remote Learning. We are adapting our curriculum to reflect this, based on our experience in the last week of term, and we will be sending out details relating to this next week. In the Senior School, there will be some changes to teachers and groups and information relating to this will be shared as soon as it is finalised. Secondly, due to some of our teaching staff being put on furlough, there will also be some changes to the Tutor arrangements. Again, information for this will follow in the coming days. Our priorities in these changes are to ensure that all the students get an excellent educational experience, along with first rate pastoral care throughout this challenging time.

We are looking ahead to future term dates as well, and are ready to be flexible with those, if appropriate, but until we know more about how things will develop, I do not feel that it is the right time to make changes, so as things stand, our term dates remain as published.

For the moment, please do continue to look after one another. Even though we are in the holidays, there is no reason why the children cannot continue to do worthwhile things, such as music practice, reading books, taking photographs, helping around the house, doing the cooking, and taking regular exercise. Keeping in contact with relatives who might be in isolation is also very important. Do share interesting stories or pictures with us, via social media, if you can.

You may well have seen that the school has provided boarding house accommodation to Paramedic students from the East of England Ambulance Service, as they undergo training before joining the front line medical teams. We are in talks with the NHS to see whether we can provide additional support through our facilities. We have also provided Personal Protective Equipment to the NHS, via our Science and Design & Technology departments. Additionally, the School is actively supporting people in the village who most need support, including the residents of the Felsted Almshouses. Please can I encourage you to take part in the Easter Card scheme ([please click here](#)) that Rev'd Little is coordinating.

Finally, I wanted to let you know that the Governors are meeting tomorrow (virtually) and the Chairman will communicate to parents on Friday with fee arrangements for next term, and into next year.

All best wishes,

Chris Townsend  
Headmaster, Felsted School

Simon James  
Headmaster, Felsted Prep School

PS Some important information from Mrs O'Brien (Designated Safeguarding Lead) in relation to online safety and gambling:

### **Children and Online Gambling**

There is no doubt that even before the current crisis, online gambling amongst the young was proving to be a concern amongst safeguarding experts. According to the Gambling Commission's annual report 2018, the greatest number of low or moderate risk gamblers was in the 16-24 year old age bracket and the second highest number of problem gamblers came from this age-range also. On average online gamblers have four online accounts.

In order to understand the risks to our children, it is worth noting that just over 40% of gamblers aged 18-24 follow a gambling company on social media sites like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Indeed, the advertising of gambling on social media encouraged 76% of 18-24 year old gamblers to spend.

Future gambling clientele is sought early on through social media and sites such as Youtube often promote gambling to children packaged as the more "friendly"-looking bingo options.

### **Loot Boxes**

In online gaming there are "loot boxes" which are virtual items users can purchase in games with real money. In the box, users will find a randomised selection of items that customise or alter the user's experience of the game. In other in-app purchases, players get to choose exactly what they are buying, knowing its value and usefulness before purchasing. With loot boxes, players don't know what is in them until they are purchased and their content can vary from low value items to ones which majorly change gameplay.

Loot boxes are common in Fortnite, Apex Legends, Overwatch, Fifa, Pro Evolution Soccer and others.

What can you do?

In addition, if your child gets into trouble with loot boxes, support from the game's publisher is available, eg, Blizzard (who make Overwatch).

It is worth having a conversation with your children about the risks of online gambling, whether in loot boxes or on online dedicated websites. During lockdown, a foray into the attractive world of gambling might seem like a viable option to pass the time but it poses serious dangers of addiction and exposure to other adult content. Check your wifi parental controls to block access to gambling sites and keep an eye on your child's expenditure. For further information or if you are concerned about your child's behaviour and how it might link to gambling, contact The National Gambling Helpline (0808 8020 133) or online at [www.gamcare.org.uk](http://www.gamcare.org.uk)