

Message from Mrs Collins, Principal, Thomas Estley Community College

Email to Y6, 05/05/20

Dear Parents and Carers of a Year Six child attending Thomas Estley next year

I hope that you are managing during these challenging times, to maintain your family's mental health and equilibrium in the face of some unprecedented barriers, and that you are keeping physically safe and well.

I wrote to you a few weeks ago to welcome you, as pupils, parents and carers, to the Thomas Estley family, and we are committed to work to support you and your child as they transition from primary to secondary school. At that time, I encouraged you to familiarise yourselves with news on our college Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/thomasestley/> and I have arranged to send you our half termly newsletters from this week onward, so that you feel a growing part of our community even though you may be physically distanced. I also sent you a link to the wellbeing blog which we have set up for Year Six Induction, and have been delighted to see some of the responses which many of you have sent in for the Easter Challenge.

<https://thomasestleywellbeing.blogspot.com/> We will continue to maintain this wellbeing blog over the coming weeks as one of a range of supports for mental health and wellbeing, which is paramount during this crisis. There are also several government funded sources of advice such as <https://youngminds.org.uk/> which offer useful guidance and contacts which you are able to access.

We are now beginning to work hard to gather information about your child to help us prepare to put them into tutor and teaching groups, support educational needs and wellbeing, ensure good safeguarding and find out about your interests and hobbies. You will have recently received a blank 'about me' information sheet – please do help your child to fill it in honestly and thoughtfully – and we are also liaising this month with their headteachers, class teachers, special needs coordinators and other agencies to ensure that we understand as much as possible about your child, personally and academically. We have also collected and inputted data from the information sheets which you have already returned to us.

Although we are still waiting to hear about arrangements for school re-opening, or partial re-opening, to plan our induction programme, we will ensure that you receive contact from tutors, get a feel for our college site, provision and expectations, and have some induction and bridging experiences before you start with us, whether onsite or remote, to help your child in a smooth transition to secondary school. Over the next two months, your child will receive information from departments and tutors and some bridging tasks to complete at home and return to us, both to prepare them for secondary work and to provide some useful structure and purpose within their daily routine. We will be putting these, as they are produced, onto our website at <https://thomasestley.org.uk/year-6-pupils> as well as notifying you directly when they are produced for circulation.

This email has been sent to you using Parentmail PMX, which is our main communication route with parents for emails and on line payments. If you have any issues with your registration onto Parentmail PMX, please contact Trudy Merry, our Reception Manager, who will be able to assist you. You can email her directly on tmerry@thomasestley.org.uk Once registered on Parentmail PMX, you will be able to pay online for any trips or top up dinner money directly to your child's account, which synchronizes with our cashless catering facilities. We would ask if your son/daughter intends to use the canteen facilities next academic year that you top up before the start of the Autumn Term. There is a manual cash payment unit opposite college reception, where they can top up their

accounts with cash when onsite, but online payment is the easiest, quickest and preferred option whenever possible. Further details about the system are on our website or in your Parent Handbook.

Please remember to order your uniform online via

<https://www.yourschooluniform.com/schools/index/thomas-estley-community-college-11-14> in good time for the Autumn Term. Blazers, ties and college sports polo shirts have to be purchased from this online store, but you may be able to find other uniform items elsewhere at less cost. Please refer to the college Parent Handbook to ensure you know which uniform items are compulsory, as the website also hosts a range of non-compulsory items which you will not need to purchase unless desired. Often items such as blazers have several weeks run in time for orders, so it is important to ensure enough time for delivery. We are currently unsure as to how the coronavirus may affect speed of uniform production and will keep you up to date as we know more. We are also currently asking for donations of uniform from past students and our charitable organisation, Friends of Thomas Estley, will have some donated uniform which they can sell on at a reduced cost. Their stocks will be limited but, if you are interested in possible purchases, please email awillett@thomasestley.org.uk who will coordinate with them. We know that financial pressures are high for some families, particularly at this time.

I look forward to communicating with you, and hopefully meeting you, soon.

With warmest wishes to you and your families,

Mandi Collins

Principal, Thomas Estley Community College