



Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, may I wish you a Happy New Year and despite the extremely odd circumstances, I hope you had a lovely Christmas.

This is my first communication with you and it comes with the caveat that things may change, as we have seen over the last 24 hours, and an apology that it is lengthy.

I am sure you will appreciate how frustrating it has been for those in education. Yesterday, we spent all day preparing for mass and serial testing and the return of two full year groups only for this to change in the evening following the announcement of the third lockdown. What will remain as key priorities for us are the safety and wellbeing as well as the academic progress of your child. I also appreciate how frustrating it will have been for you and that it could have significant implications for you and your family. I hope we can work closely together to ensure the young people in our care are supported as best they can be.

We have been asked to make some decisions by the Department for Education, based on their guidance. I have detailed these below.

Remote Learning

The expectation on staff is that they teach their current timetable via Teams so your child should be ready to learn as for a usual school day. This means attending lessons, logging on in time, being prepared and having resources necessary for a lesson. I have asked staff to continue to expect work to be completed and submitted and this should be marked with feedback given.

My understanding is that students have access to IT at home but if this is not the case, please do let us know of your circumstance so we can see if we are able to support.

We do have a set of expectations for online learning and I have attached these for you so you are aware.

From tomorrow, this will be the school timetable while we are in Tier 5 lockdown for all year groups:

8.40am	tutorial
9.00am	Period 1
10.00am	Period 2
11.00-11.20am	break
11.20am	Period 3
12.20pm	Period 4
1.20-2.00pm	lunch
2.00pm	Period 5

Vulnerable Children and Key Worker Children

The school remains open for these students and we have already been in contact with you regarding your intentions and booking a place. Students will be based in bubbles in the ILC and will work at the computers following the live lessons and if possible, they should bring in their own headphones.



Breaks and lunches will carry on as normal and students will be supervised at all times. It is important to ensure you have registered with us if you need a place as we need to ensure a fixed seating plan for those attending and provide numbers to the catering team.

All students attending should now enter through Trinity Hall.

Free School Meals

For those who are eligible for FSM, we will provide vouchers and these will be emailed to you.

Parents of Year 11 and 13 students

I am sure that this is now an extremely concerning time for you. With the announcement giving a vague indication that exams will not go ahead 'as normal' means that there will be significant uncertainty until we hear from Ofqual. Until that point, I would say that all students should continue to commit to their studies and all assessments so as to provide the most robust foundation of data upon which to form a grade, if that is what we are asked to do. Please reassure your son or daughter that we will support them every step of the way. As soon as we know more we will let you know. We have made the decision to move year 11 mocks in English and Maths and the Year 13 mocks in all subjects to after the February half term. This is obviously subject to change and we will be sending out further details.

Testing

The new guidance does not require us to implement mass testing but we are being asked to support daily testing of close contacts, as and when they occur. We are now in the process of identifying and training those staff who will be involved with this. Please follow the normal protocols of communicating with us regarding COVID.

Wellbeing

This is a deeply concerning time and one that may hit even harder than the first lockdown. We will continue to support, where possible, the wellbeing and mental health of the students and of course, our staff but we also rely on you to communicate with us. If you, or your child, need help then please let us know. It might be that we do not have an immediate answer but you have my word that we will do everything within our power and resource to support you. Much has been said about us being 'in the same boat'. I believe however that we are in the same storm and each have our own challenges. If we can help, then we will.

Please take care.

With kind regards

Tim Farrer
Headteacher