

Dear parents/carers,

I hope that you are all well and that your children are managing with home learning. Overall, we are very impressed with the effort and the levels of engagement that we are seeing from our students. I hope you do not think that we are bombarding you with information. I just want to keep you updated as best as we can.

### Remote learning

Thank you for your feedback in relation to home learning, we understand how challenging this is for students and for you as parents. If your children are getting anxious about home learning then please reassure them that all we expect is for them to try their best; remember to contact your child's tutor if you are concerned about anything. I have reminded staff about the need to be try to keep things as clear and simple as possible so that students know exactly what is expected of them. Following feedback from parents, we have reduced all live Teams lessons down to 50 minutes so that students can have little breaks from the screen in between lessons. Just a reminder that all lessons for Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 are on Teams. Next week all lessons other than maths, English and science will be on Teams for Years 7, 8 and 9. Please see below for the schedule:

<b>Week beginning</b>	<b>Years 7, 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10,11, 12 and 13</b>
25 January	Work on Frog for maths, English and science Live lessons on Teams for all other subjects	Live lessons on Teams
1 February	Live lessons on Teams for maths, English and science Work on Frog for all other subjects	
8 February	Work on Frog for maths, English and science Live lessons on Teams for all other subjects	
15 February	Half Term	

Also remember that each week, on Frog, there will be an assembly a PSHE activity and a PE activity; students can use their core PE lesson time to engage with this.

### Assessment and parents' evenings

Due to the national lockdown and the fact that the majority of our students are learning off site, we have replaced the standard set of progress data points with a home learning judgment report. You can expect to receive the report according to the schedule below:

Home Learning report schedule	
Year group/s	Week beginning
Year 11	25 January
Year 10	1 February
Post 16	1 February
Year 7	1 February
Year 8	8 February
Year 9	8 February

In addition to the above reports home, all parents' evenings will go ahead remotely using an online platform called SchoolCloud. You will receive details of this closer to the event. The schedule for parents' evenings is identified below:

Parents' evenings	
Year group/s	Date
Year 8	Thursday 11 February
Year 9	Thursday 4 March
Year 7	Wednesday 10 March
Year 11	Tuesday 16 March
Post 16	Wednesday 24 March
Year 10	Monday 19 April

## Examinations

As a parent of a Year 11 / 13 student, you will undoubtedly have a lot of questions regarding your child's grades and qualifications. The Department of Education have produced a consultation document which outlines their proposals. The consultation closes on 29 January and students and parents are encouraged to give their views. The document can be found using this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>.

Clearly there is still a lot of uncertainty and until we hear the final decision following the consultation process, we will be unable to discuss or speculate on how your child's grades will be determined. As soon as we know anything more concrete then we will be in touch. The parents' evenings will give you an opportunity to discuss your child's progress in each subject and agree actionable targets for improvement.

## Year 11 options meetings

We are reaching the time of the year when we would normally meet all Year 11 students to discuss their futures; Mrs Scott (Head of Post 16) has written to all parents of Year 11 to explain how the process will work this year.

## Testing in schools

In my recent letters, I have outlined information about testing for coronavirus in schools using lateral flow tests to identify staff and students who don't have COVID symptoms and therefore could be carrying the virus and spreading it to others. There were 3 parts to the testing:

- (I) To test staff weekly
- (II) To test students on their return to the academy
- (III) To test staff and/or students daily for 7 days who have been identified as close contacts to a positive COVID case as an alternative to self-isolation (as long as they do not live with the person who has tested positive).

Our testing centre is now operational. We are at the end of the second week of testing staff and we have started to test students who are on site this week. You may have seen in the press that there has been some controversy over the reliability of the tests which has raised concerns in terms of using them as an alternative to self-isolation. Whilst we welcome the testing in schools as it can only be a good thing to identify asymptomatic cases, we also shared some of the concerns surrounding daily testing. Yesterday, we received notice that schools are now to continue to ask close contacts of positive cases to self-isolate and not to test those contacts daily. Testing to identify asymptomatic cases will continue. If you would be happy for your child to take part in testing when they return to the academy can you please give consent here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyacwrjv>.

Thank you once again for your continued support as we navigate these difficult times; we are appreciative of all that you are doing to try and help your children with home learning whilst in many cases working from home yourselves too.

Take care,

Mrs R Coning  
(Head of School)