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15th January 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Re. Coronavirus Update (15th January 2021)

As we reach the end of our second week in lockdown, I wanted to update you on some of the key issues that are emerging.

Remote learning

Year 11 and 13 students have now had two weeks of live lessons and all other years have reached the end of their first week of live lessons. The learning and planning that the school has been through in recent weeks and months has been reflected in the exceptionally smooth transition we have seen from face-to-face to remote teaching at the start of this term. We have received a huge amount of positive feedback from parents/carers and I would like to thank all the teaching staff for the fantastic efforts they have put into getting their classes set up and engaged.

The next stage for us is to share our experiences across the school to ensure that we are getting the best out of our online platforms so that lessons don't just happen but are as effective as possible.

Testing

Staff at the school have been working exceptionally hard this week to get the on-site lateral testing up and running. This is not a straightforward process and will require both school staff and volunteers to operate. We have trialled the testing on staff who have been in school this week (including myself) and we are confident that we will be ready to start testing pupils attending our support school shortly.

Examinations

Our January examination season that concludes on Monday has gone incredibly well and I would like to thank the exams team for their brilliant organisation and the students for their attendance and consideration of safety measures while on-site.

We are starting to see some evidence of the government's thinking with regards to the setting of grades for GCSE, A Level and vocational qualifications this summer. There has been some talk of externally set 'mini exams' that could contribute to the final grades. At the moment there is a period of consultation, so we will have to wait for more details before publishing our plans. In the meantime, I would strongly suggest that students in examination years continue to engage with all lessons and online work and to assume that there will be opportunities later in the year for them to demonstrate the abilities they have in each of their subjects.

I could not be prouder of the way in which the school has stepped up to the challenge of this new lockdown. It has been a real pleasure to see remote lessons in action as I walk around the Support School for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. Staff have embraced the technology to provide engaging and purposeful lessons ensuring that disruption to learning has been kept to a minimum, students have responded with enthusiasm and parents have offered crucial support – a great example of what we can all achieve together.

I hope you all have a restful weekend and thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mr Jeremy Scott
Headteacher