



1 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are staying well and keeping safe?

Thank you firstly for your messages of support to staff, Headteachers and governing bodies which they continue to share with me. My thanks also for the kind and considerate way you have been communicating with school staff since the national school closure announcement. .

Distance Learning

All schools in our Trust continue to work closely together to ensure that our 4300 pupils and students have the best opportunity to progress their learning whilst away from school.

Our schools are keen to keep in touch with you and our pupils/students while they are working at home. We very much want to know what is going well, any challenges the children are facing and if there is anything else we can do to support them. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's school to raise any concerns you might have.

You may be aware that the BBC has recently launched a new range of daily activities for young people working at home. These may prove useful as additional work or to provide pupils/students with some further variety. They can be accessed through <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Awarding GCSE and A level grades this summer.

We are very much aware that this continues to be a key concern for parents and students who are in Y11 and Y13.

Our secondary schools will be following Ofqual's instructions on the awarding of grades this year. It is very clear from Ofqual that we are prevented from entering into discussion with parents or students about the grades that may be awarded. Indeed any such discussion could be considered malpractice. With this in mind, it is very important that parents/students do not contact teachers about any aspect of the awarding of grades before results days.

The government has now confirmed that students will receive their results on the originally planned dates: 13 August for A level and 20 August for GCSE. We will provide more information on this as we receive it.

Free school meals

Schools in our Trust will be moving across to the national scheme for free school meals so parents should receive vouchers directly. If you experience any problems with this system or you believe your circumstances have changed and you may be eligible for free school meals, please contact your child's school directly.

Reopening of schools

There has been some coverage in the media about potential school re-opening. I want to be clear with you that currently this is no more than speculation; the government has been clear that there is no planned date for any sort of return at this stage, either full or partial.

We await government guidance and will keep you fully informed as the situation develops, but please be assured that we will continue to put student and staff health and wellbeing at the forefront of what we do, as we continue to support the national effort against Coronavirus.

The next few weeks will most likely continue to be difficult for everyone. We remain a key part of the fight against Coronavirus, delivering learning and the curriculum that is organised very differently for children and young people who are at home, whilst keeping our schools open for a small number of other pupils/students.

We continue to be very grateful for all the efforts of our staff and for the continued wonderful support we have had from parents and carers.

Wishing you and your families all the very best.

Yours faithfully,

Martyn Sibley
Chief Education Officer