

Dear Parents/carers,

**Covid-19 daily update (Issue 8 – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – 2.00pm)**



*It seems the e-mail distribution system was a little slow yesterday, and some of you only received the Sunday Newsletter late in the evening. We will try to improve the system so that they come through in a reasonable time from now on.*

We have started delivering the Virtual Learning Curriculum (VLC) and, by now, all students should have had a number of lessons. We hope there are not too many difficulties with this, but if there are, just let the school know and we will work to resolve them.

Below I have outlined some more *Frequently Asked Questions* to help you.

**Contacting individual staff**

We are being overwhelmed with individual e-mails and it is not possible for staff to respond to these. Staff are busy getting used to delivering a virtual timetable throughout the day and preparing news lessons in the evening. Please avoid direct contact and rely on the daily Newsletters for updates. Thank you for your help with this.

**Free School Meals**

Those students entitled to a free school meal should collect their lunch from the school canteen between 1 – 2pm daily. We are waiting further information about the governments' voucher scheme.

**Dyslexia**

The British Dyslexia Association are offering a free webinar to parents on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 7:30pm-8:30pm. The focus is supporting children who have dyslexia at home during school closures.

Parents will need to sign up using this link: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/events/free-webinar-for-parents-this-tuesday-how-to-support-your-dyslexic-child-during-school-closures>

**Year 11 pre-course material**

We recognise that year 11 have suddenly found themselves with very little to do for this moment in time. There will be some information coming out regarding pre-course material in preparation for starting in the sixth form. We are working with Beaumont and Verulam to co-ordinate this across the BSV trust.

For now, here are two activities that year 11 can delve in to in preparation for their level 3 courses.

1. The super curriculum - start with the y11 work and begin looking at y12

<https://www.sandringham.herts.sch.uk/student-experience/curriculum/super-curriculum/>

2. Seneca Learning has a number of subjects covered at A-level that would be a start for those interested in exploring further

<https://app.senecalearning.com/courses?Price=Free&text=A-level>

### **Staying safe – social distancing**

The best advice is that if at all possible, students should stay at home unless it is absolutely necessary to leave and that if any fresh air is taken, a 2m social distance must be kept.

### **Examinations GCSE and A-level**

I realise this is a very difficult and worrying time for our year 11 and 13 students. There is further guidance on the process to be used for awarding grades this summer. For now, can I ask that parents and students **do not contact** teaching staff with individual queries regarding the process or their circumstances regarding examinations. I will update date you as soon as we have additional information.

The DfE have published a set of questions and answers around the cancellation of exams. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

The Government's priority is now to ensure affected students can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including going into employment, starting university, college or sixth form courses, or an apprenticeship in the autumn. For now, it is indicated that students will receive a calculated grade in each subject by the end of July. These will be shaped by the assessment of the teachers (based upon mock exam data, non-exam assessment and other evidence), but will be determined following the application of other data by the exam boards.

The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead. We will be working hard to ensure that this process is fair within the school and to scrutinise the proposals from the exam boards so that our students are not being disadvantaged. The government has indicated that they anticipate the eventual results will follow the normal pattern nationally, so we would expect to see outcomes consistent with previous cohorts.

The press release then refers to two ways for students to respond to receiving grades that they do not believe fairly reflect their performance. One is an appeals system, should they feel the process has been applied incorrectly, and the other is to sit an assessment as soon into the next academic year as possible. This is not an ideal situation, but we find ourselves in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis. I am hopeful that we will reach a position where students receive grades which do reflect their true performance and which give them certainty about their progression to the next stage of their education. In this context it is anticipated that universities will take a supportive approach.

*Staff cannot enter into dialogue with parents or students surrounding these grades* and it is worth noting that this is only one input into the final 'calculated' grade that will be awarded at the end of July.

### **Staying fit and healthy yourselves**

Finally, if you are finding it challenging keeping fit and healthy through the lack of access to gymnasiums then there are a number of on-line activities you can engage with whilst at home.

One of these is '**Fit Club**' which is a local hour workout on Monday evening (7- 8 p.m.), Wednesday evening (7-8 p.m.) and Saturday morning (9 – 10 a.m). I know a number of our parents already participate. It is run by someone I know well, Sarita (Gray), and she has now set this up as a virtual class using Facebook. All you need to do is search for **Absolute Fitness** on Facebook and request to join the group. There is no charge – all FREE. All you need is a water bottle, gym gear and possibly a mat or towel. You would need to join by 6.00 pm for a 7 pm start. Have fun?

I hope this is of help in these difficult times.

With best wishes

**Alan Gray**