

22nd January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers

As we reach the mid-point of this half term I wanted to make contact with parents/carers again with a few updates. Firstly, can I say how impressed I have been with the attitude and engagement of our students in adapting to another period of remote learning. I know it is another challenging time for both students and their families but I am confident we will work through this together and return as an even stronger school community once schools can fully reopen.

One area we are very conscious of is student wellbeing and mental health during this period. We have introduced a number of wellbeing activities through the PSHE, PE and the Tutor Time programmes alongside the Student Executive and Head Girl Team, who have been doing some great work in providing ideas of lockdown activities. Tutors are using the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday tutor time slots to meet with individuals or small groups from their tutor groups to provide an opportunity for them to talk through any challenges or support they may need.

Please remember the Personal Tutors, Student Progress and the Safeguarding Team are on hand to provide any additional support or guidance if needed. Please do contact us by e-mail or ring the main school number (01756 707600) if you have any concerns you wish to discuss.

Ofqual consultation on GCSE and A-Level awarding processes

Year 10, 11 and 13 students have received a separate communication about this earlier in the week. Ofqual have published their proposals for the grade awarding process this summer and opened a consultation that runs until 29th January. If any students or parents would like to read and send a response the link is given below:

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

Mass Testing/ Lateral Flow Testing

As you may be aware there have been some changes made this week by the DfE/ PHE to the guidance around lateral flow testing in school. Mass testing of students on their return to school is still planned to continue but the use of serial testing (daily testing) for those identified as close contacts of a positive case is being paused nationally. This means any students who are identified as close contacts will need to self-isolate for 10 days.

The changes also mean that in the event a student tests positive on their lateral flow test the legal duty for themselves, and their household members, to self-isolate begins from that time, i.e. they do not need to await a confirmatory PCR test.



Parents' Evenings

Barring the odd technical glitch the move to carrying out Parents' Evening remotely seems to have been successful. After each parents' evening we do run a Parental Survey for parents/ carers of students in that year group. We would encourage all parents to try to complete this as it forms an important part of our self-evaluation and school improvement process.

Finally, I thank you once again for your ongoing support and especially for the lovely messages which parents/ carers have been sending in over the last few weeks. I always pass these messages onto the staff concerned and they really do provide some extra positivity in the current time. Likewise, if you have any concerns or queries please do not hesitate to contact myself, or a member of the staff team.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Turner', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr Mark Turner
Head of Academy