

5th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carers,

Following the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday evening, I am writing to provide you with some key information from my colleagues concerning how the school is managing the latest changes.

It will not surprise you to hear that the staff here at Wyvern St Edmund's have been working incredibly hard to plan for last minute changes, adapt working practices and provide high quality remote learning materials for our students. We have an incredible team with a real 'can do' spirit and I am grateful for the positive way in which they have responded to the challenges presented. Thank you also for your continued support of the work they are doing.

Exams- Mr Martin

Our thoughts are with our students in years 10 and 11.

In case you have not yet heard, the move to remote learning until at least half term, has led the government to change its rhetoric regarding GCSE and vocational exams in the summer of 2021. Information from HM Government has made it clear that *"in these circumstances we do not think it is possible for exams to go ahead fairly this summer"* and they are now in the process of liaising with Ofqual about next steps. We are waiting for further information about how exam grades will be awarded and how students will be assessed, and as soon as we know more we will write to all affected students and their families. It is worth noting however, at the time of writing, that we have not been told categorically by the government that the summer exams, in their usual format, will be cancelled. We of course keep you fully updated.

The government has made it clear however, that they still expect exams scheduled in January to go ahead. Some students in Year 11 have a vocational PE exam and/or a vocational Health and Social Care exam on Monday 11th January and we expect all students sitting these exams to attend school in uniform at 8.30am (for students sitting the PE exam) and/or 1.00pm (for students sitting the Health and Social Care exam) on Monday 11th January. Students should enter the site via the Year 11 entrance where they will be met by senior staff and the exams team. Please be reassured that additional social distancing measures will be in place, equipment will be fully sanitised, and handwashing facilities will be in place. Invigilators will also be wearing PPE and any student who wishes to wear a mask in the exam may do so. No decision has been made about whether mock exams scheduled for the end of February will be cancelled. At the moment students should assume they will go ahead; they may form part of the government's alternative arrangements. If this is not the case and mocks cannot go ahead, we will inform students and their families immediately.

What is vitally important is that students expecting to sit exams this summer continue to access remote learning, engage with their loom lessons, attend live lessons and live tutor time sessions, and continue revising. While we do not have any information about what is going to happen this summer, it is reasonable to expect that some form of fair and robust assessment will take place, and students should work as if they are still being examined (hard, I know!) in May and June. We would also like to stress that learning at Wyvern St Edmund's isn't just about the end result. Knowledge, whether it is assessed in the form of an exam or not, is a wonderful thing to have. We are keen to see our Year 10 and 11 exam students engaging with their lessons, and continuing to learn and enjoy learning. As soon as we have more detail about what the next few weeks and months hold, we will be in touch.

Teaching and Learning- Mrs Lee

Further to our recent correspondence on remote learning, please be aware of the following. Firstly, it is really important that students log onto Satchel One (previously called Show My Homework) using their own accounts. This is necessary because it enables students to see their own 'To Do' list, complete Satchel One quizzes and it also means that the school can run reports to see who is accessing the work set. Students who are seeing the work set via their parents' or carers' account will not show as having logged in. For any school purposes, students must use their Wyvern St Edmund's school email account and not their personal email accounts for safeguarding reasons.

An updated timetable of live sessions for next week, including sessions for Year 11, will be available before the end of this week via email and on the school website. We will also publish a timetable of live lessons for the remainder of this term to allow families to plan ahead, but please be aware that the timetable could be subject to change.

Tutors will be in touch with students who have not logged into Satchel One using their own accounts, if they are not completing the work set or have not attended live sessions. This phone call will be to establish how we can support you and your child further with remote learning. Should you receive a phone call, please be aware that it may show as a withheld number.

If you have questions about the work set, please contact the class teacher. For other enquiries, please contact your child's tutor.

Accessing remote learning- Mrs Lee/Mr Hunt

We fully appreciate the challenges for many families of remote learning at home and aim to do all we can to support you. We are aware that the Satchel One app crashed earlier today but was up and running again quickly. This is unsurprising on the first day of countrywide remote learning, but as a company, they are very responsive and resolve issues promptly. If this does happen again, please reassure your child and explain to them that there is nothing further they can do about it until the issue is resolved. We will also be aware that there has been an issue. We do not want students worrying about things that are out of their and our control.

We are currently processing all requests for support as we receive them.

If you are having issues with logging into Satchel One (ShowMyHomework); for example, a forgotten password, **please contact your child's tutor in the first instance** and they will be able to support with resetting the password. We will also be sending out a short instructional video later this week to help with accessing the learning at home.

Access to IT equipment- Mrs Smith

We have a limited number of laptops to loan and are waiting on a further supply to be delivered to school. Equipment will be allocated as soon as we are able to, so please bear with us, it is a priority we are working on to resolve. If you have an issue with internet access, please let us know. All requests for IT access and support should continue to be made to Mrs Smith:

csmith@wyvernsteds.org

Free School Meals- Mrs Burns

The central Finance team have organised the provision of food vouchers for those in receipt of free school meals. The vouchers will be posted to you by the middle of next week and will cover until the 18th January 2021. Further vouchers will be issued in accordance with government guidelines. Any queries regarding vouchers can be answered by Mrs Burns: aburns@wyvernsteds.org.

COVID-19 Lateral Flow Testing- Mrs Smith/Mrs Ure

We would like to thank you all for such a quick response yesterday with regards to completing the required consent and registration forms for the student mass testing programme. In light of new lockdown arrangements, and a prolonged period of remote learning, we will not be continuing with mass testing of all students at this stage.

However, the COVID testing programme will continue to enable weekly testing for staff and daily close contact testing for those staff and pupils that are attending our Hub provision. Please note that this is the close contact testing only and is therefore in the event of a student or staff member being identified as a close contact of a positive case of COVID. Consent for this was included within the consent forms that you have already completed. If your child will be attending the Hub and you have not completed a consent and registration form yet we would be grateful if you could do so to ensure we have information on your consent preference.

The continuation of this programme will also allow students to be tested when they return to school after lockdown. More information about this will be sent out at that time.

We know this will be an anxious time for many students, but would like to re-assure you that your child can contact their tutor by email at any time during the school day.

The main telephone line will remain open throughout lockdown during normal school hours, so please contact us should you wish to discuss any issues. You can also email office@wyvernsteds.org with any general queries.

With best wishes and thank you again for your support.



Mr B Burley
Head of School