

Thursday 7th January, 2021.



Penketh High School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. The period of remote learning has started well and it's been fantastic to see pupils and staff engaging through Teams during each lesson. As you know, our remote offer follows our usual timetable that pupils would undertake in school, meaning that pupils should be accessing each of their lessons across the day. The class teacher will be present for the lesson introducing work, asking questions of pupils and addressing any queries.

We invested a lot of time during the summer rewriting curriculums so that we'd be able to transition quickly between remote learning and onsite teaching meaning that no matter what the circumstance we'd be able to guide pupils through the planned sequenced curriculum. It's been fantastic to see our young people engaging in their work with a mature attitude.

Of course, as I'm sure you can appreciate with circumstances at the moment, there are occasions that mean staff might be unavailable to be present and "live" during the lesson, but staff will be in attendance to the vast majority of lessons.

If, for any reason, pupils can't access their lessons at the time they are scheduled to run they will be able to access either the resources for the lesson or a recording of the lesson through Teams so that they can catch up with any work missed.

Where there are concerns relating to access to Teams we have set up a dedicated email address for parents to direct queries remotelearning@penkethhigh.org.

We have already started recording the attendance of pupils to remote lessons and where we had concerns we raised these with parents yesterday and will continue to do so over the coming weeks.

Year 11 exams and mock results

I'm sure both parents and pupils will be aware that the government have announced that GCSE examinations will be cancelled this year. Yesterday the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, stated that following consultation with Ofqual and the exam boards, rather than exams, he has decided to use a form of teacher-assessed grades to award grades to Year 11 pupils this year.

At the moment we only have the headline and the details relating to the specific process we'll be asked to undertake to award grades will be established during a consultation period over the coming weeks. So at this stage we can't relay to you any further detail other than, at the moment, the government's plan is for schools to assign grades to pupils.

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THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

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Principal: Mr J Carlin BA(Hons) NPQH



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There will be a robust moderation process at school, regional and national level meaning that the process for awarding grades to pupils will be rigorous. Any decisions that schools make will all be driven by the evidence available to us as to the performance and progress demonstrated by pupils. This means that it is imperative in the coming weeks and months that pupils continue to engage in learning as any and all evidence that we can collate may help to support staff in drawing conclusions as to the grade to award a pupil.

As you know we'll be issuing mock exam results to pupils tomorrow morning. These will be distributed via school pupil email accounts available through Office 365. Where parents are unable to access these, for whatever reason, please contact Mr Farrar who will ensure these are reissued to you.

Obviously, in normal circumstances, we'd be conducting a mock results day and staff would be on hand to speak to pupils where they want to discuss their results. To replicate this process, and to ensure pupils have the chance to speak to staff where they have concerns or queries, we will have members of staff available tomorrow in Teams to speak to pupils and Mr Farrar will be forwarding further information regarding how to access this.

Mobile Data

We have been notified that we may be able to request additional mobile data allowances for pupils where they are struggling with connectivity. Where pupils don't have broadband at home or where they are struggling with connectivity to be able to access remote learning through Teams we'd ask that parents contact us by emailing extradata@penkethhigh.org. Once we've received this a member of staff will contact you to discuss the application process in order that we can support pupils to be able to access remote learning.

Mass Testing

We commenced our mass testing programme in school this week, offering asymptomatic COVID testing for pupils and staff present in schools. Whilst schools aren't obliged to offer this service until Monday the 11th of January, we felt in a secure position following the work and planning undertaken by staff during the Christmas break. This rapid testing process, providing results within 30 minutes, will identify any asymptomatic positive cases quickly helping to protect our school and wider community.

Thank you for your ongoing support and for the kind messages and comments forwarded via email and social media. The staff and I are determined to do all we can to support pupils during this difficult period and to ensure that we provide them with the best learning opportunities in the circumstances we face. I'd like to thank all of our staff for their continued hard work and dedication in support of our outstanding young people.

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I know from speaking to some parents that they appreciate the preparation that staff have put in to planning and delivering remote lessons and supporting pupils who are still attending school. The support of our school community means a great deal.

I will keep you updated regularly and whenever information is released to schools I will ensure that we communicate this to you quickly. I wish you and your family all the very best at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin.

Principal.



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