

Dear <parent/carer name>

I extend my best wishes, and I hope that you and your families are well during this continued period of lockdown.

I am writing to update you on information regarding the next half-term and also to thank you for your continued support with the school closure. I have been delighted with the positive feedback from a number of parents with regard to our Virtual Learning provision. Staff are working really hard to ensure that we deliver as much of the normal school curriculum as we can, whilst also taking into account the pressures of online learning. I hope you join me in thanking the staff when you can. They really do care.

I would also like to thank pupils for their attendance to online lessons and continued effort with online learning. Staff have remarked how well pupils have adapted to online learning and the positive attitude to learning of the vast majority of pupils.

Full Re-Opening of Schools

With regard to the full re-opening of schools, the Prime Minister announced last week that the **earliest** date upon which schools could expect to return to 'normal' operation and opening would be **March 8th** and **not** straight after the half-term holiday as originally proposed. He also made clear that this plan was dependent upon a number of other factors relating to the control of the pandemic and that the full re-opening of schools could be delayed even further. In addition, it is likely that some type of phased or gradual re-opening will be recommended, but we await further details of this. As soon as any updated information is released we will communicate it to you.

GCSE Assessment

Those of you who have children in Year 11 will know that the government's consultation on the arrangements for GCSE assessment closed on Friday. The DfE and Ofqual will now reflect upon the thousands of responses that have been submitted nationally and draw up the formal guidance that will be issued to schools. Although we do not have an official timescale for this process, it is expected to take several weeks: we will obviously be in touch with pupils and their families as soon as any further announcements are made. In the meantime it is crucial that all Year 11 pupils continue to follow the curriculum delivered by their teachers and remain fully focused on their studies. A reminder that year 11 pupils are using their target grades for college applications.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We are currently living through extremely challenging times, and now perhaps more than ever looking after our Mental Health and Well-being is of paramount importance to us all. Happy pupils make for happy learners and happy children often make happy parents and carers. Our pastoral team will continue to be available for you and your child should



you need to contact us. Please see the links on the school website where you can find support for:

- Pastoral team support links
- Working from home guide
- Lockdown Legends celebrating the work of pupils
- Links to ICT support from school

Also please note we are only an email or a phone call away if you need support!

Free School Meal Vouchers

The Government has confirmed that FSM vouchers will be available to eligible parents for the two weeks after half term. Please ensure we have your most up to date email address.

Specialisation Evening

Please note that this is delayed until 4th March and will be an online event. We will send a letter outlining this to parents of year 8 and 9 pupils after half term.

And finally, I hope the new half term brings us further details of a return to school for pupils.

Kind regards

Andy Burton
Headteacher