

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Message to parents: Supporting your child's continuing education

Dear Parent / Carer,

The announcement of school closures and the cancelling of external examinations came as a shock to everyone. At present we do not have any information regarding how grades will be awarded, but have been assured that they will receive the qualifications they need to start their next chapter. Ofqual are due to make an announcement tomorrow and we will let you know as soon as we have any information. It may be through predicted grades, coursework or some other form of assessment. You and your children will no doubt be confused, disheartened and anxious about the future, but the cancellation of exams and closing of schools will not mean that their efforts have been for nothing.

What we do know is that their journey through education will continue: Y11s will still go to college and enrol on further education courses; Y13s will still go to universities and become undergraduates, and all students in other years will return to school to start their next step of education. It is in no-one's interest for these students to lose out, and more important than ever that they are fully prepared for the next stage in their journey.

We firmly believe that education is about so much more than passing exams: it enriches us, excites us, nourishes our souls and helps us grow as humans. It is the lens through which we view the world. It broadens our horizons. No matter how uncertain the times, it is our duty as educators not to let our young people miss out on the chance to feed their minds while they are away from school, so that they can be ready to return whenever that may be.

To do this, we are changing our emphasis from continuity to opportunity. We will still provide work for students to complete at home as we had planned, but this can now be put to a different purpose than exam preparation. We will stay in touch with students and do the best we can to help them in new ways.

### To support students to continue to learn and stay focused, we will:

- **Provide Y11 and Y13** with work that deepens their knowledge and widens their skills to enable them to prepare students for A-level, College, or undergraduate study. We will keep them in good learning habits and encourage a solid work ethic. We will suggest wider reading or interesting case studies that will build on the learning they already have. We will prepare them for their chosen courses so that they can start in September at least as ready as their peers, if not more so.
- **Provide Y7, 8, 9, 10 and 12** with work that keeps students' skills and knowledge 'in practice' and in good learning habits for their return to school. We will focus on what's interesting, unique or exciting about each subject. We will draw on interesting opportunities to be creative and let them find inspiration in what they can read, watch or discover.
- **Continue to support** the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of all of our students. Our remote learning provision will also reflect this, and help them to still feel part of our school community even when they can't attend.
- **Explore different ways** of providing lessons via video and audio podcasts. Google Classroom will stay the main channel for students to access their school work because it is the one with which they are already most familiar.

This will be a challenging time for all. We will remain open for children of key workers. It is clearly important that our community pulls together to support one another. Whilst I wish the circumstances were different, I would like to pay tribute to the maturity, focus, and spirit of our school community, which represents all that is good in the world.

Best wishes,

**Mr Ben Hill and Dr Mike Dore**

**Deputy Headteachers**