

29th January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

As we head towards the end of January, you will have heard this week the Prime Minister announced that the government will be reviewing the current restrictions with a possible phased return to school for some pupils from 8th March. Although at this stage, we await further information, it is clear that we will continue with remote learning for most students for the foreseeable future. We are very proud of all students who are doing their very best in these uncertain times and we thank you for supporting them.

Remote Learning

Yesterday was allocated as a student wellbeing day and we are delighted to hear that students have felt they have had the opportunity to catch up, reflect, revise at their own pace or take part in other activities away from their screen. It has been lovely to see them return to remote lessons today more refreshed and re-focused, I hope they have felt the benefits. Although their academic engagement is highly important, we are very aware that the benefits of their overall wellbeing is key to their academic success and we will continue to maintain this balance for all concerned including students, families and staff.

The next wellbeing day is Thursday 4th February.

Loan laptops

Please do not struggle without IT equipment for your child, although we have prioritised children who are entitled to free school meals, we do have a small supply of equipment available so just let us know by completing a request on [link](#) on our school website if you require support. We have this option available due to the generosity of our school and local community who have made both financial and equipment donations. Our heartfelt thanks once again.

Microsoft Office Licence for use at home

Information about how students can access Microsoft Office licences for use at home on their own devices (laptop, tablet, smart phone) can be found on our school website by following this [link](#).

Attendance

Please continue to let us know if your child cannot attend the Emergency Provision or lessons due to illness or for another reason, e.g., a medical appointment. This information must not be communicated by your child to their teacher but should come through normal school attendance procedures.

Parents Evenings

Thank you to all who attended the year 11 virtual parents evening last night. Feedback has been exceptionally positive and can I thank once again my colleagues for their time to remain connected with our young people and families. We look forward to speaking to our year 12 parents/students next week. Further information will be sent to year 10 parents after half term about their parents evening which is scheduled for 10th March.

Year 8 support – RSL/Head of Year

I have this week written to all Year 8 parents, to advise Mr Smith has made the difficult decision to rescind his RSL role for Year 8 and I would like to thank the parents who have since emailed to express their appreciation of the excellent care and leadership that Mr Smith provided for this year group. I am however, delighted to announce that Mrs Jones will be taking this role after half term. Mrs Jones will be in touch with parents and students in due course to introduce herself. In the interim, please direct any year 8 enquiries to your child's tutor in the first instance and then if the situation requires, please contact Mr Sidwell who is currently acting as temporary RSL for the year group.

2021 Exam Series

The Ofqual consultation period about how grades will be awarded this year ends tonight at 23:45. You are still able to express your views up to this point. Please find the published proposals and option to partake in the consultation on the following link. [Ofqual consultation exams 2021](#). Although the consultation ends tonight we have not yet been advised when the results will be published, or a timeline of when schools will have clarification for students and families. We will, as always, continue to communicate any updated information with you.

Local Authority Winter Grant for Families Entitled to Free School Meals

Cheshire West and Chester council have asked us to signpost families to information about the Government's Covid Winter Grant Scheme. Cheshire West has been allocated Government funding to support residents with the cost of food, fuel or water rates throughout the winter period.

The eligible children and young people that this Scheme will support are:

- Families with children receiving free school meals on 1 December 2020.
- Families receiving either a Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction on 1 December 2020 AND with children below the age of four, or children between the ages of 16 and 18 inclusive.
- Individuals who have left the care of Cheshire West and Chester Council and are below the age of 25 on 1 December 2020.

For more information and to apply for the funding, please follow this [link](#).

Finally, a personal thanks to all parents who I know are having to juggle the complexity of supporting their children with their learning plus manage their own professional or personal situation. As a dad to two teenage children, I fully empathise (and sympathise!) with the complexity that we all face and the effect the recent announcement around the extension to our present position will have on everyone's mindset. The feedback from my colleagues are that our children overall are thriving and getting fantastic support from yourselves. For this we are truly grateful but for those who may need further support, guidance or reassurance please remember that we are here for you and your children.

As many of you are aware, I personally have strong connections on a national level with organisations and agencies that support the emotional and mental health of communities and as a school I am excited to announce that we are now starting to work in partnership with Young Minds. Below is a link to their website and can I recommend the article on how to support your child at home in these times.

[Young Minds](#)

[Young Minds support for parents link](#)

Stay safe and have a lovely weekend.

With kind regards

K Simpson
Headteacher