

Update for Students & Parents, 3rd May 2020

Dear students, parents and carers

Tutors have been calling all families over the past few days and, at the time of writing, we have been in touch with over 80% of you. It has been lovely to speak to you all and reassuring to hear that most of you are doing well. We are also extremely grateful for your support and understanding of the challenges faced by teachers at the moment. At the same time, we fully appreciate that it is a really testing time for so many of you and we cannot repeat enough that we are here for you if you need us.

There continues to be a lot of discussion in the media about when schools might re-open, in what form and for which year groups. It goes without saying that we all want to see schools safely open as soon as possible, both for the sake of the education of young people and for the wider economy. However, although it is tempting, I don't think it would be very helpful for me to speculate on any of this for the time being; we are planning for various scenarios, but just don't know enough to make any concrete plans yet. Rest assured that we'll let you know as soon as we do have any news and that we will be doing all we can to ensure school is safe for everyone if and when we do re-open.

In the meantime, here are a few points to consider:

- Please [click here](#) to see a video message from me for parents and carers.
- The latest edition of the school newsletter is [here](#).
- In response to a few issues we have picked up regarding **home learning**:
 - We know some of you have been worried about **submitting work to teachers** where Show My Homework refers to 'online submission'. Apologies for the confusion here – it is the default option on SMHW and we haven't been able to change it until now. However, there is now an option for teachers to select "*No submission needed – home learning (Covid-19)*" which ought to stop the mixed messages from now on.
 - Teachers are letting students know explicitly if they need to submit any completed work (i.e. KS4 and KS5 students). When this is the case, they will ask students to email work or upload it on Microsoft Teams.
 - As set out in our [expectations for home learning document](#) it isn't feasible for teachers to be providing individual feedback on work for KS3 students at the moment. However, if you have done a really good piece of work and want to email it to your teachers, then they will be really pleased to see it.
 - Satchel One (the company who provide Show My Homework) have produced a range of [helpsheets to support parents](#). It would be well worthwhile parents and carers spending a few minutes browsing these so that you can best support your children.
 - **Parents/carers** - the noticeboard on Show My Homework is a helpful place to keep an eye on. Messages to year groups are often shared here, so regularly checking this is a good habit to get in to when supporting your children.
 - **Above all, please email your teachers (or Head of Year) if you have any worries at all about anything. They will get back to you as quickly as they possibly can.**

- We are very aware that some of you are still feeling rather overwhelmed by the amount of work on SMHW. We are mindful of this and trying to adapt by, for example, starting to set work in smaller 'chunks'. However, please be aware that (as you'd expect) there is a huge range of feedback from different students and families and it is impossible to pitch it perfectly for everyone; many of you are actually telling us you like the fact there is plenty to be getting on with. **The most important thing to remember is, as it says in our [top tips for home learning](#), not to put too much pressure on yourself.** This applies to students and parents!
- Apologies for the delay in confirming **options choices for Year 9 students**. The current circumstances mean things are taking longer than anticipated, but we are working hard to finalise these and hope to be able to confirm choices in the next two weeks.
- A reminder that any **Year 10 queries** that would normally go to your head of year should be directed to Mrs Feast for the time being, now that Mr Eyres has left. We interviewed for the head of year post last week and, having had an exceptionally high number of applicants, are delighted with the appointment we have made. Watch this space for more news!
- **Edge Hill University** have put together a broad offer of [outreach activities](#), for **all year groups**. The sessions vary each week and include generic study skills, budgeting and a general introduction to higher education, as well as individual subject sessions such as routes into teaching, medicine or sport. You may find these interesting and useful.
- **Year 11 students**: if you haven't already seen the letter on enrolling for the [Eton College course on research skills](#) then please take a look. This should be well worth your time. **Year 13 students** should have received a similar email from Mrs Jennings; please contact her if not.
- [Yr11 transition work](#) went live last Friday. Parents should have had text/Gateway messages by now and students have been sent information on their email and also on SMHW explaining how to access the work. Please note that the work is on the [website](#) not on SMHW. You should have already been sent the password but please contact Mrs Jennings if not. Please note, this is the first block of work; another will be released after May half term.
- Year 12 should have begun their [progression tasks](#) which are all on the website (school closure portal) and have been emailed to students. Year 13 have also been set [progression tasks](#), which should help keep them busy
- **The UCAS personal statement webinar** delivered by Lancaster University is on **Wednesday at 11am**. Year 12 students have been sent information to get them started with this: please contact Mrs Jennings if you haven't had this.

Take care, everyone.

Kind regards

Gwyn Williams