

24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

To: Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers

Yesterday marked the start of a new era for the education community. The academy is now closed to the majority of children going forward and our staff and students are transitioning to a new way of teaching and learning in the virtual world. We are committed during this unprecedented time, to continue to deliver the best possible education for our young people through remote learning. Yesterday was a key day and it is crucial that together we ensure that the students build the right habits. I am sure many things will go smoothly but as with everything we do for the first time we will all learn some lessons and have to adapt over time to ensure the students get the best deal possible. As advance warning, I'd like to let you know the academy will be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday, and that the daily setting of work will pause over the two week Easter Holiday period (Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March until Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April). Some holiday learning will be set for this time, but daily tasks will not. The academy will remain open for those students who are registered to be with us during the Easter break and they will be able to work on this holiday learning. For those students eligible for Free School Meals, the current system in place will resume after the break.

Staying in touch is fundamental to our work and wellbeing, and should be a principle for all of us on a daily basis. We encourage you and your children to have daily contact with friends and loved ones by phone, Skype, FaceTime etc. We will continue to contact you by email and our website and social media will be regularly updated – I'm aware that there has been a lot of information recently, including yesterday. Our aim is to keep you as informed as possible as we enter this new way of working.

I have to admit that it feels uncomfortable to prevent children from having access to the academy – it felt very empty and hollow yesterday and schools are not designed to be empty but whilst we would like to stay open for all our families who need us, we have an obligation to ensure that we do our bit to implement the government's plan to limit social interaction. It is really, really important that students stay at home during this time. This is not an extended holiday and the government's plan will only have great effect if we all ensure the children stick to it.

### Parents of Years 11 and 13

The exam boards have yet to provide us with specific details of the mechanisms they will be using to estimate grades. There are some suggestions in the media that it will be teacher predicted grades but it is very, very unlikely to be as simple as this. I am sure at some point we will have to provide some indication of the grades we feel each child would achieve in May/June along with evidence to support this. Until it is crystal clear the message is that they must all continue to work very hard and finish their courses and engage in any preparatory work for their future courses.

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In addition, Year 10 and Year 12 will need to keep working hard. How they approach the coming weeks will determine their success in GCSEs, A Levels and BTECs next year. This is a great opportunity to get ahead of other students nationally who may treat this as an extended holiday.

Thank you as ever for your unstinting support. Take care of your families and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Jackson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**James Jackson**  
**Principal**

