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Dear Parents

I hope this note finds you and your families well.

Last evening, the Prime Minister made it clear that we would not see a reopening of schools immediately after the February half-term as we had hoped. Rather he indicated that, “depending on a lot of things going right”, 8th March was the earliest schools could reopen. We await further information from the Department of Education and I will of course update you as soon as I hear.

In the meantime, we continue with our remote learning programme. Thank you for those who were able to respond to our recent survey. A summary of the outcomes can be found [here](#). We are committed to continually improve our offer and your comments are of fundamental importance in this respect. It is clear that the live-streaming of lessons has been a significant step-forward compared to the previous lock-down period. I know how important it is for the young people to feel part of a wider learning community and also for them to maintain their motivation during this time when they are away from school. Certainly, from your feedback, it is clear that live-lessons support in both these respects and more.

Our staff are continuously working on making lessons as accessible and engaging as possible to ensure that we can offer consistency and quality learning despite the barriers that currently stand in our way. To clarify once more, students are encouraged to review their learning at 8.30am each day to confirm which live lessons they have and which are non-live, therefore Google Classroom based. They should be following their usual timetable at home as well as usual lesson times.

Many comments from the survey indicate a level of concern that, despite the very best of efforts, some students fear falling behind with the work that is being set. In response, next **Wednesday, 3rd February** will be a consolidation day for all year groups. This is primarily to provide students with time to catch up on any incomplete or missed assignments that have been set on Google Classroom. There will be no live lessons set that day although some subjects may set work on Google Classroom. Students should therefore check Google Classroom for the subjects timetabled that day. They may take time to go back over key learning, this being particularly important for year 11 students who will have assessments of some form later in the year. Once students are up to date with their work they could use the time to tackle some of the activities set out in our [Super Curriculum](#), available on the website, and pursue some of their broader interests. The day will also accommodate some of the additional year 9 parent - teacher meetings supporting the options process.

There has been much in the news recently about the use of lateral flow tests in schools. As you know, we are now a registered testing site and we have a trained team of staff who are able to administer these tests to students and staff on-site. When the schools' mass testing programme was announced by the government before Christmas, it had been imagined that the serial testing of students (or staff) identified as close contacts of positive cases would remove the need for self-isolation periods away from school. PHE and the DfE have subsequently changed their guidance, stating that the testing should not be used in this way at present. Regardless, the testing procedures we have in place at the school continues to provide a useful tool in the early detection of asymptomatic cases.

As the majority of Oathall students continue their studies at home, I remain grateful to all their teachers for working so hard to provide the very best learning experiences possible. We also welcome a significant number of students to the site each day and I would like to thank all the staff working on-site making this provision possible. The interim director of public health in West Sussex, Tony Hill has produced some [useful information](#) for those students attending school at the moment.

The continued uncertainty surrounding the awarding of GCSE grades is most unhelpful to our students in year 11, I know. The current DfE / Ofqual consultation closes shortly and I hope to be able to share further news on this in the very near future. In the meantime, we continue to work closely with our federation partners and other secondary schools with the aim of securing consistency in the approach taken in the production of the centre assessed grades.

I would like to close by thanking you for all that you are doing to support the education of your children at this most challenging of times; I know it is not easy. Also, to say thank you for all your emails and letters of support. These are always gratefully received and I know, are a significant boost to the staff.

Kind regards

Edward Rodriguez  
Headteacher