

Tuesday 5th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

You will be aware that yesterday the Prime Minister announced that all schools will close until February half term. All students will be educated remotely during this period.

Clearly the next few weeks will present challenges for many of us. The intention of this letter is to provide you with information that will support your child.

Yr11 and 13 students sitting examinations this year

Many students will be understandably anxious after the announcement that examinations will not go ahead as usual this summer. We have not been informed of any alternative arrangements but will communicate these as soon as we receive them. What I can provide you with is the assurance that we will do everything in our power to support your child in achieving success this summer. Students will receive their qualifications and it is as important as ever that students continue to engage in their studies so they are in the best possible position to gain the recognition that their work deserves.

An assembly is scheduled for all students tomorrow at 8.45am. Our Yr11 and Yr13 assemblies will address specific issues relating to examinations. Pupils will be able to access the link for this via an email from their Pastoral Leader.

Vulnerable students and the children of key workers

The school continues to be open to students who have been identified as vulnerable and the children of key workers. Please click [here](#) to access the criteria for vulnerable children. If your child is in one of these categories and you wish them to attend school, please book their place using this [link](#). Children attending school should bring a packed lunch. To support our planning we will require you to fill out the form each week via the weekly parental bulletin.

Children eligible for Free School Meals

Food hampers are being prepared on Wednesday and Thursday this week, with the aim to deliver the hampers to every child who has an entitlement to free school meals provision over the next two days. We are currently awaiting further guidance from the Government for future provision and we will update you as soon as practically possible on this.

Mental health support

We appreciate that the current situation we all face can significantly impact upon a young person's mental health. We are here to support families and any person requiring additional support. We have a counsellor in school, family support worker and pastoral staff who have been trained in supporting children with their mental health. If you feel that you would like some support from school staff please contact dcroslan@whickhamschool.org and he will ensure that provision is put in place.

You can also access the website [Kooth](#) which will help your child have immediate access to mental health support services and counsellors online.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding all pupils. Should you be concerned about any safeguarding issues over this lockdown period then please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies

- Mrs Maher smaher@whickhamschool.org

- Mrs Macpherson smacpherson@whickhamschool.org
- Mr Phillipson phillmst@whickhamschool.org
- Mr McCaughey mccaui@whickhamschool.org.

Information technology at home

We appreciate that remote learning can be challenging and we have been supporting many families in both accessing resources that support remote learning and developing skills to utilise them effectively. If you feel you would like support please contact the achievement team by sending an email to achievement@whickhamschool.org .

The importance of good communication

As we move into a period of remote learning it is more important than ever that communication between school and home is effective. We will be sending a weekly parental bulletin each Thursday that will enable us to communicate important information to you.

It is also vital that all students engage effectively in remote learning. Students will need to follow their normal timetables. We will contact parents and carers individually if we feel children need additional support or are not meeting the expectations we have set. Staff will be checking work each week and you will increasingly see many lessons being streamed live to your children. Information on Remote Learning can be accessed [here](#).

The Achievement Team is here to support you with any issues your child may be having with their work or IT issues. The team has temporarily expanded to support during this national lockdown.

If you have any queries please email achievement@whickhamschool.org or contact the following year group representatives on the school number and the extensions below:

- Y7 - Miss Envy (Ext. 318)
- Y8 - Mrs Hammerton (Ext. 228)
- Y9 - Miss Jones (Ext. 201)
- Y10 - Mr Day (Ext. 317)
- Y11 - Mrs Hughes (Ext. 206)
- Y12/13 - Mrs Ross (Ext. 252)

Please stay safe and do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require specific support.

Yours faithfully

Fraser Turnbull
Headteacher