



Dear Parents and Carers,

It's hard to believe that we are now nearing the end of May! This half term usually flies by as students prepare for examinations and end of year assessments, or look forward to the celebration events, trips and visits of the last summer half term. However, this year it looks so very different.

Following on from Mr Corbett's letter we understand the majority of learning will still continue online. With this in mind, we will start to use Microsoft TEAMS to communicate and set assignments for our students. Microsoft TEAMS can be accessed through your child's Microsoft office 365 and e-mail account (see guides attached). Students who do not have access to computers or internet will still be able to collect work from school.

Staff are now used to virtual meetings and some are now using video conferencing with small 6th form classes using TEAMS. For a whole variety of reasons, we will not be using this functionality (video conferencing) with all classes preferring instead to set teaching materials students can use to complete their assignments or signposting students to existing online material and youtube clips where appropriate.

Please be clear that we fully recognise that there will be demands over technology at home, and in the end, students will just need to do their best to access as much learning as they can, and be creative with solutions. I know that many families have already created daily timetables, rotas for sharing laptops between siblings and so on.

It is important also, to recognise that staff are having to work in a home environment often sharing computers with variable broadband speeds. They are adjusting to managing learning, providing student feedback and communications with other staff, students and parents online. All of this is much more time consuming than working in school particularly when staff may also be looking after their own children or elderly parents. For these reasons we will prioritise the teaching and feedback to year 10 and year 12 who are studying for examinations next summer. The work set in KS3 is designed for students to work independently without teachers being required to collect and mark work. Students in this age range are not expected to work any more than 2 to 3 hours online per day.

What is important is that students do not become over-anxious and they just do what they can. There is much to be said for students spending more time enjoying reading, playing a musical instrument, or engaging in other recreational activities.

The current arrangements are no substitute for classroom teaching and the social aspects of school life; I understand the frustrations of both parents and students. All I can say is that everyone is doing their very best in what is a difficult and often stressful set of circumstances. We really do appreciate your continued patience and support in the extraordinary situation we find ourselves.

We wish all of our families the very best over the coming weeks, and look forward to the day in the not so distant future when the doors will reopen.

Yours faithfully

Mr Carl Pittaway
Assistant Headteacher