



29th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The past week has been a time of change and adjustment for every one of us. I have been trying to take stock, drawing together the reports and impressions that have come from staff and, I'm pleased to say, from very many of you.

With so much that is new going on I am sending you three separate communications. I hope that you find this effective and helpful. **This letter** will be along the lines of those that I have been writing recently, bringing you up-to-date with our work as a school. There is also a **Newsletter**, similar in format to its many predecessors and drawing on information sent in by staff and parents. **The DSHS Gallery**, however, is an experiment. It is a display of some of the work which has been achieved over the past week. I thought you should see its variety and trust that, like me, you will be encouraged by the commitment and care which it represents.

The Challenges of Teaching and Learning Online

When we began to prepare for this new way of working I was concerned that we risked not asking enough of our students. The reality of the past week, however, is that we have at times been asking too much. Teachers are used to adjusting the pace of a lesson as they sense the responses across their classroom. Currently of course, that is not possible.

We do not want your sons and daughters to become passive recipients of the assignments sent out by their teachers. Please encourage them to email staff where the volume or the pace of the work is too much for them. That feedback really is very important.

In addition, there may well be more that we can do to monitor work which is being set. This is new for all of us and we as a school are still feeling our way.

I am very interested to find that some Sixth Form lessons have, as it were, been taught rather than sent. This has been done by using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. It may be that we can use this technology rather more widely.

Friday 3rd April

Friday is the last day of term. We shall not be setting any new work, leaving the day as an opportunity to round off assignments yet to be completed. Meanwhile the staff will be taking time to assess the extent to which their students have been taking up the new opportunities online.

Staff Retirement

Friday is also the final day of full-time work for Mr Kevin Maltby. He has taught English here at the high school for nine years. He carries with him the very best wishes of the school as a whole.

Free School Meals

The government has yet to tell us how the new national scheme will work. In the meantime we shall continue to send out Morrison's vouchers as we did last week.

The Easter Holidays

Years 8 and 9

No specific assignments will be set, but some departments will be suggesting activities relating to the themes of their work. These should be seen as optional extras, certainly useful but far from essential.

As well as this I am encouraging students to record, in one form or another, an aspect of their experiences in these extraordinary times. It could be, for example, a diary, a composition, a piece of artwork or a dance. It could be something to look back on when some form of normality returns. When we return to school there will awards for the best pieces of work. Please send them in whatever format is most appropriate to goodnews@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk

Years 10 and 12

I know that some departments are intending to set some GCSE or A-level assignments over the holidays. Also, I think that many of these older students would benefit from the suggestions that I have made to Years 8 and 9.

Year 11

We have been promised that there will be more detail about the awarding of grades during the next few days. Meanwhile, there is work which can be done to ease the transition into A-level studies. This will be set out subject by subject.

We have decided that we shall be rather more generous than usual in offering places on our own A-level courses in September. That seems to be the only fair approach in the circumstances. In marginal cases it is all the more important to have seen the transitional work as an additional opportunity. We shall take this into account when a student's GCSE record is disappointing.

Other Resources

I'm attaching a list of staff email addresses. Please respect the fact that many of them will be on holiday over Easter, despite the fact that the school will remain open to the children of key workers.

I am also attaching information about the curriculum summarised by our departments for each year group. I am hoping that this will help parents to see where the work currently being set fits into the overall plan for a particular year.

Finally

Much was achieved in the past week. That is a relief to all of us who want to see the work of education continue. It would not have been possible without the contributions of many staff and many parents. I want to thank as well the cleaners and the site team, who have done an important job in closing down our buildings in good order.

I wish all of you a safe and healthy week.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters