

22nd March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coronavirus Update 8

At last I am able to write to you with a degree of certainty about what is happening at the High School. It would be rash to assume that there will not be unexpected developments, but what follows is our expectations as we begin the new week.

Our Leavers

The final day at school is a very significant point in the life of any young person. On Friday we did our best to mark it as well as we could and I want to thank all those in Year 11 and Year 13 who worked with us, despite the circumstances, to create something that was suitable.

A-level Examinations

As you already know, the 2020 A-level exams have been cancelled. Nevertheless, A-level grades will be awarded – it is intended by the end of July – and an A-level certificate will follow in the normal way. These grades will be honoured by universities and colleges which have already made conditional offers.

The first step in determining these grades will be taken in the school. We shall work through our candidates one by one and put together PPE grades, the marks of non-examined assessments, predicted grades and any other relevant information. On the basis of this we shall arrive at a provisional grade. (We are promised that the exam boards will provide more detailed guidance as to how this can be done both fairly and robustly.)

The exam boards will then make their own assessment of what we have provided before determining the final grade, the one that will be published.

In the meantime, we are urgently considering whether there is anything more which can properly be done to complete any non-examined assessments which are still outstanding. If we find that there is, your son or daughter will be contacted directly.

It will be possible to appeal for a published result to be reassessed. The Government has also said that there will be an option to sit a conventional exam early in the new school year. At present I do not know how that would be organised.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent Examinations

These exams have also been cancelled. Grades will be awarded nonetheless, most probably by the end of July. These grades will reflect our candidates' performance and prospects as fairly and accurately as possible. The school will first assemble all the evidence that we have, drawing on PPE results, predictions, non-examined assessments and any other relevant information. Using all of this, we shall propose a grade and submit it, along with the supporting information, to the exam boards. They will be looking at the integrity of our proposals, including comparing them with our previous record.

In the meantime, we are looking at the non-examined assessment work of each of our candidates. When there is more which can fairly and properly be done, we shall get in touch with the students concerned.

As in normal years, it will be possible to appeal against the final result once it is published. The Government is also offering the possibility of sitting a conventional exam early in the new school year, but I have yet to hear any details of how that might operate.

Year 11 Students preparing for A-level Courses

The months ahead are an opportunity to do some useful work in preparation for new courses. We have begun to look, subject by subject, at how to make the best use of this transitional period and will keep you in touch as plans develop. Those who have applied to our Sixth Form but not yet been interviewed will be contacted shortly to organise a telephone interview. If you have any concerns or questions about the Sixth Form please e-mail Simon Jones, Head of Sixth Form: JonesSA@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk

Sons and Daughters of Key Workers

Thank you for letting us know if you fall into one of the categories which the Government has defined and require help in looking after your son or daughter. Currently we are expecting to see some 40 - 50 of our students in the morning.

School for them will run during the normal hours. School buses will operate as usual on Monday the 23rd and Tuesday the 24th March. I have not yet heard what will happen from Wednesday onwards.

The students will not be required to wear school uniform, but they should be prepared for some form of physical activity during the day.

For much of the time they will be shadowing the normal school curriculum. The school canteen will certainly be open on Monday. After that we shall decide whether there is sufficient demand for it to continue. (Please also see the section below about free school meals if that scheme applies to you.)

The scheme for the children of key workers will continue throughout the two weeks of the planned Easter holiday. During that fortnight the daily programme will take a different form.

Students who are working at home

Most of our students have taken home the books which they are going to need. If your son or daughter finds that they need a book or other material which is still in school, they should email Office@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk and arrange to collect it from reception. They should not come into the school without making an arrangement beforehand.

We can provide paper or exercise books in cases of hardship. As I have said in previous letters, teachers and tutors remain available to their students whenever help is needed.

I would very much like to receive examples of any pleasing work which is being done at home. Please email a copy of it or a photograph to goodnews@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk.

Students who normally work away from the school on Alternative Provision

A small number of our students have been attached to other organisations for part of the working week. All these arrangements are now cancelled.

Free School Meals

The government is working on a national voucher scheme. In the meantime we are providing a local voucher scheme which we have negotiated with a local supermarket. The vouchers will be available in reception from Tuesday morning. You will be asked to sign for them.

Safeguarding

We are all aware of the risks which everyday life presents to children and young people. Each working day there will be a member of staff on site who is trained in Safeguarding. Do not hesitate to ask to speak to them if you have a relevant concern or to e-mail our Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of his deputies:

They are:

Jamie Broughton Broughtonjd@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk
Gemma Lloyd Davies Lloyddaviesgl@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk
Andrew Ward Wardam@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk
Yvonne Hemming HemmingY@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk

The School Site

Our site staff are still at work. They are taking the opportunity to clean our buildings as thoroughly as they can.

It is important that we prevent any unnecessary use of the site. Please do not enter it without having previously made an arrangement.

Finally

I am sorry to impose so long a letter upon you. Thank you not only for your forbearance amidst all that is changing, but also for the supportive messages which many of you have sent.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters