



Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Parental Update

I am writing to you today to provide you with an update on the current situation regarding our remote learning, summer examinations and the use of lateral flow devices for Covid testing in school.

I am aware that it is not easy for parents to negotiate the flow of information in the media in relation to schools that can lead to misleading headlines, confusion and anxiety all round. I feel it important to share that the information in the media relating to the ever-changing situation is not preceded (as you might expect) with communication in advance to Headteachers and schools. This does create a sense of an unrelenting vigilance required from school leaders to stay up to date and decipher what is and is not genuinely newsworthy and what is misleading speculation. Thank you for your patience and support in what I know as a parent are extremely confusing and difficult times. It is my intention to try and communicate as frequently as necessary (yet not excessively) to support you in keeping up with the situation as it continues to evolve.

Please find a summary below of the current situation:

Remote Learning

Last Monday we started 'live' daily registration on Microsoft Teams in order to support daily pastoral contact with tutors and peers and maintaining routines and a structured remote learning experience. We have also been increasing the number of live learning experiences in lessons as part with our revised remote learning approach. The rationale for our approach, details of the structure of the day and a number of 'how to' videos can be found on the remote learning section of our website here: <https://www.warlinghamschool.co.uk/235/remote-learning>

Summer examinations

On Monday 4th January the Prime Minister announced that GCSEs, A Levels and Vocational examinations would no longer take place as planned this summer when he announced the implementation of a national lockdown. Since that point, the Secretary of State for Education has said that teacher assessment rather than an algorithm will be the main method of awarding students' qualifications this summer. While there has been much speculation as to the workings of the system to allocate grades, last Friday a joint consultation from Ofqual and the DFE was shared with a closing date of the 29th January. Until the results of the consultation are received and the DFE plans made public, despite media speculation, the exact nature of how qualifications will be awarded remains unclear. I am sending a separate letter to the parents of students in Year 11 and 13 with further information and links to the consultation in addition to this letter.

Covid Testing in School

The use of lateral flow tests have also been in the news because questions about whether the government's reliance on lateral flow tests and, in particular, serial testing as an alternative to self-isolation for close contacts of positive cases will be an effective means of enabling students and staff to remain in school in the event of being a direct contact of a positive Covid case. While the use of tests as an alternative to self-isolation is in question, we will continue to use self-isolation should any student or staff member in school be identified as a direct contact of a case as we have done since the start of the academic year in September.

Notwithstanding this, we have completed a risk assessment for testing, set up a testing centre in the Gym and a fully trained team of testing staff for the testing of staff and students who have given consent who are attending the in-school provision for Critical Worker children.

Student Wellbeing

Finally, as the lockdown period continues, and students feel the impact of not being able to come to school and socialise with their peers we are aware of the toll this can take upon their wellbeing. Please see the PE department's Physical Activity Competition on our website to keep active in support of health and wellbeing <https://www.warlinghamschool.co.uk/238/physical-activity-competition-lockdown-3-0>. So far, our school community has travelled the distance from Warlingham to Cannes in the south of France (1,169 KM)! We will be sharing regular links about support available and ideas in the Newsletter as well as regular assemblies and Tutor activities. Our Tutors and support staff will be making regular 2 weekly check-in calls with students starting this week as well as our live registrations in support of students and managing their remote learning during lockdown.

Once again, I want to thank you for the support you are providing at home for your children in what I know are demanding circumstances for parents and carers having to balance your working lives with support of their remote learning.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Foster
Headteacher