



THE KING'S SCHOOL

GRANTHAM

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have now completed the first week of the Government enforced closure of The King's School for the vast majority of students. I hope that you are all holding up well under these extremely unusual circumstances and I am grateful that the weather remains good, enabling the boys to get some fresh air.

I am delighted, but not at all surprised, by the loyal support of our staff. We have a number of teachers on site allowing our key worker parents to continue their vital roles at this crucial time and an even larger contingent of support staff who continue to run the site and provide all of the administration support that enables the smooth functioning of the school.

When we became aware of the potential closure of schools in England we quickly began formulating plans for the associated issues that working from home would bring. I asked all of my Subjects Leaders to work closely with their departments and to write a fortnight's worth of work so that students could continue to engage with their learning from the comfort of their homes. I am very grateful for the work that was set and this has supported the learning of our students. I also asked staff to prepare for the potential of a longer-term closure and therefore the need to be able to set work once the Easter vacation was over. We shall be using the Virtual Learning Environment, called Frog, which allows work to be set and collected in. Parents are also able to access work through the Parent Portal on Frog.

Each department has been asked to set work in sufficient quantity to replicate the allocated daily timetabled time and possibly a little more for further study as appropriate. This is for years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. I suggested to staff that the work set is broken up into the work to be done period by period where possible so that students do not receive large sections of work to do all in one go. On the whole this has been manageable but of course subjects by their nature are different and therefore the frequency of the cycle may vary.

We are aware that this is a new way of working for both staff and our students. This is something that we have given great consideration. I am concerned about how the workload will vary as staff become sick and the impact that critically ill staff or students will have on our school community. We are trying to create a system that is sustainable for as long as it is required.

Marking and feedback presents a problem for us as a school as so much of this relies upon face-to-face individual support and intervention. We have asked all staff, as a minimum, to provide either answers or mark schemes to facilitate self-marking or exemplar solutions which the students could compare their work to and then make amendments as necessary. Students can then feed back to the teacher on the issues they encountered so that support can be provided where it would be appropriate to do so.

To maintain a sense of normality for the students, we intend that the school end of year examinations will continue following the published schedule. These will be set on Frog and will be held in line with the school calendar. We would appreciate your help in supervising these where possible. We are fully aware that this will not produce the same results as when the tests are completed in school. Our aim is to try and provide some continuity to the usual rhythm of the year and some short-term targets for the students to work towards.

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The next round of examinations should occur for Year 8. We are suggesting that a revision assignment should be set on Frog by each teacher with a date when the end of year examination will be released. There will be a relatively short time frame in which this will be completed. These examinations would normally straddle Easter. Under the current circumstances, I would hope they will be predominately completed by the end of the first week back after the Easter break.

We pride ourselves on the pastoral care of our students and despite these challenging circumstances, we will endeavour to maintain a level of support for each and every individual, especially at this potentially upsetting time. We are investigating a mechanism by which Form Tutors can make contact with each student in their form on at least one occasion in both terms 5 and 6. When an appropriate approach to this has been found, you will be informed. Mrs Wigham (Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead) will also be in contact with those students who meet with her regularly to provide support during the period of closure. We would also encourage any student or parent to contact us if there is anything at all that the pastoral team can help with. In order for the information to be directed to the correct person, please email Mr Dixon (Deputy Head Master) at justin.dixon@kings.lincs.sch.uk

I hope that this helps clarify our approach going forward but also expresses my nervousness around staff and students becoming sick. There are a considerable number of staff who had to self-isolate for personal reasons. There are staff who have families and are trying to balance the needs of their children or elderly relatives with continuing, like you, to work from home.

I hope that we can continue to provide clear and meaningful work for the boys which will maintain a level of learning and facilitate a smooth reintegration into school when we are given the green light to welcome the boys back. As a school we are very aware that for Year 10 and 12 the actual formal examinations are a little over a year away and that they may be out of school for some of this time. However, I know that the boys will work with the staff and we will try to bridge the gap in their learning.

For Year 11 and 13 students it appears that the wait for greater clarity on grade allocations will come to an end next week as Ofqual have assured us that the mechanism for awarding grades will be published. As soon as we understand the mechanism, I will write to students and parents to inform them of the next steps.

I have been delighted with the positive nature of the Year 12 reports and these will be sent to parents very soon via the Frog portal. I have taken the decision to delay the release of the Year 13 reports until we have greater clarity on the mechanism for awarding final external grades.

We shall continue to provide child care for children of Key Workers and will be sending out an email at the start of next week asking parents to sign up for places over the Easter holiday. Thank you for all your support during this difficult time. I know that by working together, we shall ensure that the King's community remains as strong as ever.

Yours sincerely,

SIMON PICKETT

Head Master