



# THE KING'S SCHOOL

GRANTHAM

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

I hope everyone is well and coping during this period of lockdown.

The school continues to function, but certainly not normally. I am pleased to say that the roofing work will start again next week on Brook Street, which means that it will all be finished, and the security fencing removed, by the time the boys return to school. We have had climate control work done in the Tower Block and I am really looking forward to the boys enjoying much more bearable temperatures in that building during warmer weather in the Summer and Autumn terms.

In this update I have focussed on opportunities to support wellbeing. I am delighted to hear of the positive ways that students are finding to work successfully at home and that all students in the school have logged onto FROG. The number of assignments being completed is also exceptionally high. Thank you so much for your support in this area and to the teachers who are having to find new ways to create the content and set work. I would like to thank you very much for all of the messages of support and the stories of the boys' successes.

I am sure that like me you are all keen to hear what the detailed plans are for reopening schools and how the government intends for this to be done in a safe and controlled manner. There has been considerable press coverage concerning schools opening. Often I read a report quoting a source, who only moments later refutes the claim. Can I draw your attention to the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>. This has all the daily updates from the Department for Education. Any legitimate statement of how schools will reopen safely and in a controlled way will be published on this site.

## Setting work

I was part of an online discussion with a number of Head Teachers this week about the numerous different ways that schools had been setting work. There were a variety of approaches across the schools which included Google Classrooms, Teams and the Microsoft Suite, Zoom, Firefly VLE and FROG. It was interesting to learn how all of the schools had tried a variety of different approaches to online learning. The general consensus amongst all the schools involved was that the approach taken by King's was the most successful and that some of the other strategies were both unsustainable and had given rise to safeguarding implications for students and staff.

We are keen, however, to understand more about how the students are finding the experience and will be sending out a student questionnaire next week to help us better understand the 'new' learning experience. Thank you in advance for your feedback through this mechanism.

## Microsoft products at home

The school uses Microsoft 365 for students and staff. This provides online access to emails and most of the Microsoft Office products. For students to access Microsoft 365 please go to: [login.microsoftonline.com](https://login.microsoftonline.com) and sign in with your school email address and password.

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This will redirect to Kings ADFS page and please type in your school username in the following format: grkin\firstname.lastname followed by the school password. This will grant access to emails and office products through the web browser.

## Mental Health and Well Being

This week pastoral staff have been phoning families to see how everyone is getting on. I'm reassured from these conversations that boys and families are in good spirits and using the opportunity to develop many new skills and even helping around the home with domestic chores! I would like to remind boys and parents that physical and mental health, including exercise and spending time outside, are very important at this challenging time for our country and should be prioritised over school work. It is our sincere hope that no student should be worrying about schoolwork.

This week on FROG we have added some resources that will enable students to think about how small acts of kindness can make not only someone else feel good but makes us feel good too. There's growing evidence that small acts of kindness improve our own mental health, boosting our morale and self-esteem as well as reducing depressive symptoms. The good news is you don't need to do something huge to feel the benefits. Just send a message to someone you've not heard from in a while, pay someone a compliment or help someone out at home. For more ideas, check out the kindness calendar from the British Red Cross on FROG this week.

Mrs Wigham, our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, and the pastoral team are available if you need some support from school for your child or yourself. Please contact Mr Dixon (Justin.Dixon@kings.lincs.sch.uk) in the first instance and we can direct you to the right place.

In addition to the support we can provide in school there are many external organisations that can provide help, support and advice. Here are just a few of them – with brief descriptions and numerous links.

### Online support from Mind

Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. It runs an Infoline which offers information and advice on mental health; you can call on 0300 123 3393, text on 86463 or email at [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk).

Mind also has a page dedicated to coronavirus and mental health at <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/> which includes information for older children and teens who are worried about the virus and advice for how you can support your son as the pandemic continues.

### Online support from the Children's Society

The Children's Society works towards directly improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people and has a range of resources that could be helpful during the pandemic.

They have created the Covid-19 mental health and wellbeing hub at <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/young-peoples-mental-health-and-well-being-during-covid-19> on their website which has detailed information on looking after yourself at this time.

### Online support from YoungMinds

YoungMinds is one of the UK's leading charities fighting for children and young people's mental health. It operates a Parents Helpline on 0808 802 5544.



Your son can visit its dedicated website at <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/> for advice and signposting, including information on looking after your mental health whilst self-isolating and self-care tips.

### Online support from Childline

Childline is a free counselling service for children and young people aged 19 or under.

Your son can call their helpline on 0800 1111 to speak to a trained counsellor, or they can use its '1-2-1' chat on their website if they don't feel as though they can talk over the phone. This can be accessed at <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/> Young People can currently speak to a counsellor online or on the phone from 9am to midnight.

We realise this might be a case of 'information overload', but it is always useful to know what additional support is available for children and adults.

### Independent learning and careers resources

Last week I announced a new resource called FROG Play that students may wish to use to develop their learning outside of the activities provided by staff. I am delighted to report that many boys have risen to this challenge and used this fun, quiz-based programme which allows students to earn points and avatars and compete against schools from around the world. Well done to Josh Mack in Year 8 who has answered over 1200 questions in the last week and is climbing up the FROG Play World Championships Leader board. There are a number of boys who are closing in, so I'm sure the competition will increase next week. FROG Play can be accessed from the link on the homepage of FROG.

GCSEPod is also available through the homepage of Frog and covers more than 20 subjects and features over 3000 audio-visual podcasts written by teachers and is recommended for all students in Years 7-11. GCSEPod are offering a series of webinars to students and parents on multiple GCSEPod features and how to make the most of the software. To book a webinar please go to <https://www.gcsepod.com/news-gcse-learning-revision/podup-presents-webinars>

During this period of lockdown, it may be an ideal time for boys to start researching future career opportunities and this week we made a comprehensive list of careers resources available to all students via Frog. This week you may wish to spend some time with your son(s) exploring the following websites on exploring different job roles:

- <https://icould.com/> - Videos featuring real people talking about their careers.
- <https://guest.startprofile.com/world-of-work/explore/industries> - Information about different job roles.
- <https://www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz> - Quiz to find jobs that are suited to you.

### Year 11 and 13 Students

I must apologise as last week I announced the weeks that the GCSE and A level exam results will be released instead of the actual dates. Both results are released to students on a Thursday. The examination boards will moderate grades and then release them on 13 August (A level) and 20 August (GCSE).

### Key Workers

We continue to provide an in-school opportunity for students to complete their online work for children of Key Workers and we regularly send out an email asking parents to sign up for places.



Thank you for all your continuing support during this difficult time. It is a pleasure to know that we are still able to work together to ensure The King's School remains as strong as ever.

Keep safe and well!

Yours sincerely,

SIMON PICKETT

Head Master