

5 January 2021

Dear parent/carer

Lockdown Update 1

I wrote to you on the 31 December 2020 and 4 January 2021 following the government's announcement, just before the New Year, about when students would return to our Academy this term. These letters can be found at <https://www.dukeries.atrust.org.uk/parents/parent-info/>

I am sorry to be writing to you again, so soon, on this subject. However, as you will have seen, the Prime Minister has now announced a new national lockdown because of rising infection rates of COVID-19 across the country. As part of these lockdown measures, all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England are to be closed from today, Tuesday 5 January 2021, for on-site learning, except for the children of Key Workers and vulnerable students. This is likely to be the case until at least the end of the February half term.

If you or your partner are a Key Worker, or if your child is classed as vulnerable, and you have had a place confirmed then the Academy will remain open for on-site provision.

For those students and staff attending on-site provision, we will be maintaining the approach to safe working and infection control that we have adopted throughout the pandemic. As this will include additional ventilation, we would advise those attending to ensure they wear additional layers of clothing, such as a white vest/t-shirt under their shirt and a school jumper, during this period of cold weather. We can lend a jumper to any student who may need this.

For all other students, we will be offering remote provision. High-quality remote learning will be provided to make sure our students continue to receive a consistent education. We know that this places pressure on you at a difficult time but your support in helping your child engage as much as possible is so important and we are very grateful for it. Please let us know if your child does not have access to a device or an internet connection to allow them to take part in remote learning – we may be able to help.

As I stated in my letter yesterday, we expect students to attend all lessons. We will be taking a register during Tutor Time and during each lesson. Our pastoral teams will follow up on any non-attendance. Please follow normal Academy attendance procedures if your child is ill and will not be attending either remote learning or on-site provision.

Contacting the Academy

We are dealing with a high volume of calls to the Academy. To ensure we can respond to your queries please contact us on office@dukeries.atrust.org.uk and your message will be passed on to the appropriate person to deal with. All issues related to IT, including password resets, should be sent to ITSupportTDA@academytransformation.co.uk. Please provide your child's name, year group, the Academy name as well as details of the problem. This is to support our IT team who work across a number of Academies and will speed up our response time.

Please do not use our social media feeds if you need to contact us, as they are not consistently monitored and we cannot guarantee a timely response.

Examinations

The Prime Minister also announced that “not all exams” would go ahead as normal this summer and that there would be alternative arrangements put in place. He said the government would set out further details on this later. I will provide an update as soon as this information becomes available.

We are exceedingly proud of the hard work, resilience and commitment to their studies shown by our students in Year 11 and Year 13 students during the COVID pandemic. We know that many of our students will be disappointed that they will not be able to sit their examinations, and some will be anxious about how this will impact on the next stage in their learning, training or employment. Rest assured our staff will be on hand to offer expert advice, support and guidance over the coming weeks or months. It is, however, exceedingly important that students in Year 11 and Year 13 continue to attend their remote learning lessons to ensure that they continue to develop the knowledge and skills they will need in the future and for any evidence that may be needed in the awarding of qualifications. Please contact our Year 11 team or our Sixth Form team if you wish to discuss this further.

The government and the exam boards, last night, confirmed that vocational examinations in January, will go ahead as planned. The Sixth Form team have contacted students in Years 12 and 13 to confirm arrangements for examinations which will take place on Wednesday and Friday this week. We will be in contact later in the week to confirm arrangements for examinations due to take place week commencing 11 January 2021.

I will continue to stay in touch with you during the lockdown period to provide regular updates. However, do let me know if you require any support relating to these new arrangements by contacting office@dukeries.atrust.org.uk.

Free School Meals

The government also confirmed it will provide Free School Meals to eligible students during this lockdown period. I am awaiting confirmation on how this is to be done, and I will be in touch when I can to ensure this important provision is in place as soon as possible.

I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for your understanding and ongoing support in helping us to manage this unprecedented situation.

Please continue to take care and to stay safe.

Kind regards



Mr Ged Rae
Principal