

Dear Parent/Carer

A week is a long time in education! On Monday we were having staff training on mental health and well-being, preparing for online learning and mass testing of staff and students, and a staggered return to the classroom for students. By late evening we were all put into a national lockdown and schools were told to remain open for some students and online learning for all. The media message that schools are closed is singularly unhelpful as staff continue to go to work and provide the education for all students. On Tuesday the mass testing programme for staff and students was paused. On Wednesday the Secretary of State for Education confirmed what many of us were dreading but could see was a necessary consequence of the pandemic – the cancellation of GCSE and A level exams, and yet on the same day the continuation of BTEC, CNAT and CTEC exams for the next two weeks was confirmed. What we need now is a period of calm so that we can digest all that we have heard and read, work out what is best for our young people and focus on supporting our young people the best that we can.

I thank those of you who have sent in messages of support, praise for the efforts of the staff who are working in difficult circumstances and a huge 'well done' to the students who have engaged so keenly with the high quality online learning. I hope that they are coping well and would encourage them to take regular breaks and exercise, as well as leaving their screens off (including mobile phones) at the end of the school day for some time, for their own mental health and well-being.

### **A level and GCSE Exams**

You will be aware of the news regarding GCSE and A level examinations this year, as announced by the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, in which he said that exams are cancelled and grades will be decided by schools, with greater trust in teacher judgements rather than applying an algorithm as in 2020. Everyone will have their own view of this as the government consistently told students, parents and teachers that exams would go ahead this summer. In school we made no assumptions about the assessment procedures and, therefore, do have contingencies in place to ensure a fair and rigorous grading process takes place, but will wait to see what further guidance and instruction is forthcoming from the DfE. What we can say is that hard work will be recognised and the effort put into studies, and which students will continue to do so over the coming months, will not be wasted and will be reflected in the final grades. The results will be indistinguishable from the grades awarded to students in previous years and will still allow students to progress into the next stage of their lives, be it the Sixth Form, University, apprenticeships or employment. The system we use will be fair and balanced and based on objective evidence. Any grades that teachers generate will be moderated carefully to ensure consistency between schools. If any student were to be disappointed with their eventual grade, we expect there to be a mechanism to appeal and take a follow up exam in the Autumn, just as there was last time.

There is much to take in at this time and reflect upon, in addition to everything else we have had to deal with over the last few months. Students may well be upset, disappointed and frustrated and that is completely understandable for someone in their position. Teachers were aware of the possibility of this occurring and will guide and support students through the remainder of this year, so they should continue to work hard in their lessons, keep learning, enjoy their studies and know every piece of work they complete will make a difference.

### **Student Engagement with Remote Learning**

Whilst recognising that the vast majority of students have engaged positively with the online Teams lessons offered this week, we are conscious that as parents you would wish to be informed quickly of any lack of engagement or poor behavior so that this can be nipped in the bud. The following concern codes have been added to ePortal so that teachers can log any emerging issues relating to the current period of learning. Most parents have access to ePortal, but if this is not the case, it can be requested at:

<https://www.carres.uk/site/section/eaccess/default.asp>

#### Lesson Attendance

In the first instance, if a student fails to attend a lesson on Teams, subject teachers will use the following code:

**A&G Failure to attend online lesson (during school closure)**

If a student then fails to attend further lessons in a subject, teachers will use this code:

**C2R Failure to attend further online lesson (during school closure)**

#### Lesson Engagement and Conduct

**A&G Poor engagement in lesson (during school closure)**

**C2R Persistent poor engagement in a series of lessons (during school closure)**

**C2R Poor behaviour in online lesson (during school closure)**

In both cases, brief additional details will be added by the subject teacher where needed when logging the student event.

#### Work Submission

In the first instance, if a student fails to submit a piece of work by the deadline set, teachers will use the following code:

**A&G Work submission deadline missed (during school closure)**

If a student then fails to meet an extended deadline for the same piece of work, teachers will use this code:

**C2R Extended work submission deadline missed despite reminder (during school closure)**

#### **Year 11 Parent Teacher Consultation – Wednesday 13 January**

This will take place between 4pm and 7pm and be delivered online through SchoolCloud. For booking appointments and joining instructions please refer to the letter emailed out by Mrs Millband on Wednesday. A reminder that the online booking of appointments with subject teachers for the event closes at 7pm on Tuesday 12 January.

#### **Parental Survey – Access to Remote Learning**

The school has compiled a survey to assist us with our planning for the online delivery of lessons for the next few weeks. We are looking to identify where support may be needed,

but please be aware that we have finite resources in school so are not able to give hardware to students. However, where possible, we shall try to address issues that you bring to our attention, and it may be that your child can come into school to participate in the online lessons using our resources.

The survey will close at 4 pm on Tuesday 12 January. Please follow this [link](#) for the survey.

## **Technology and Data**

The government has announced that while schools are closed as part of the lockdown it has been working with the UK's leading mobile network operators to provide free data to key educational sites. The providers currently offering this are SMARTY, Vodafone, Three, Sky Mobile Virgin Mobile, EE and Tesco Mobile.

As a school we can request help to increase mobile data allowances for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

Schools can also make requests for children who cannot attend school face-to-face because they are clinically extremely vulnerable or restrictions prevent them from going to school. If you would like to apply for this data increase on mobile networks to access education on site can you please complete this [form](#) by Tuesday 12 January at 4pm. Please be aware that each of the providers has its own disclaimers, over which we have no control. Further information is available on the gov.uk website.

## **School Transport**

The LCC has confirmed that transport will now run as normal until Friday 15 January 2021 to support schools for longer whilst they are still identifying students that will be attending. The deadline for when parents must inform the LCC if their child still needs to use education transport has been extended to Wednesday 13 January 2021. Parents should [complete the Request school transport form](#).

## **Children of Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children**

The following students are able come into school if there is no safer supervision at home:

- Vulnerable children – the SENCO has contacted these students.
- Children of critical workers. We deem those in Years 7 and 8 to be of the age to need supervising in school but strongly encourage older children of critical workers to continue with their studies from home giving them better access to live online lessons.

If you have not already done so, you must register your child's attendance using this [online form](#) if they need to attend school all day on any day between 11-18 January. It would be appreciated if those who have previously indicated that they would like to book a place please re-commit as this helps with our planning.

It is our intention to roll out the Lateral Flow Tests next week to these students. If you are happy to be tested /for your child to be tested, please complete this [consent form](#) (one per student) and submit it by 10 January 2021, if you have not already done so.

**Finally**, I would like to thank all parents who have sent messages of support and empathy. We are all in this together and it really does demonstrate the great resilience of the Carre's community. If we focus on the areas of our lives that we can control and do the little things right then our outlook on the situation will be much improved. As I said to the students in the online assembly:

"Life's not about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain."

Have a good weekend.

**N M Law**  
Headteacher