

5 January 2021

Dear Parent and Student

Clearly since my letter to you yesterday there has been some further and considerable change with regards to the national context. I wanted to assure you that we continue to assess and address our provision as we have been, to best serve the needs of our young people at this difficult and unsettling time.

Firstly, with regards to learning, the information I shared yesterday still applies. Remote teaching and learning is taking place for our exam groups now. We have in-school provision, running for our critical worker and vulnerable student groups now. All other students have tasks set and next week will be moving to more extended remote teaching and learning provision. Throughout this period when most of our young people need to work from home, we will be monitoring their engagement closely and will be in contact if there are concerns. We will also have regular contact to ensure that everyone is okay.

Secondly, with regards to well-being, if a parent or student has any concern whatsoever, then we urge you to be in contact with us via email or telephone and let us know. We will do everything we can to help and support. We understand that not returning to school for a little while will be fine for the majority of young people but others may struggle and we are committed to putting in place the most appropriate nature of support possible.

Thirdly, it has been announced that the summer public examinations will not now take place. This may well leave our examination students feeling very uncertain. Although we don't yet have information from the Examination Boards and the Government about the awarding of grades this year, I want to provide some reassurance. Last year, as a school, we managed very successfully the Centre Assessed Grades and believe all our young people received the grades they deserved and were therefore positioned to move to the next stage in their educational journey in line with their aspirations and expectations. We believe that there is no reason why this should not be the reality for our young people this year. The absolutely critical thing at this stage is that all engage in the work set. If there is to be an element of teacher assessment that informs the final outcome of public exams - as was the case last year - then we need to have evidence of work, and the standard of work must warrant the grade. Our students have been advised before that a target grade is not the same as a current performance grade and therefore it is essential that all put in their best effort now to complete their best work so that they can be assessed and awarded the best grade by teachers in light of current performance, if this is the process that the Government and Examination Authorities are going to pursue this year. It is to be noted, however, and separate communication has gone out about this, that the vocational exams scheduled for this week and next week will still be taking place and we wish our young people the very best as they engage in these.

Fourthly, all families whose children receive free school meals should now have received contact and have made arrangements to collect their hamper. If there is any change to this arrangement in light of lockdown we will advise you immediately, but for now, all arrangements communicated are still being pursued. We are aware that the quality of the content of this hamper needs to be addressed and this is something that is being pursued as a matter of urgency. This is not something that we provide directly but on behalf of our families we are addressing the nature and quality of the content and expect this to be rectified as a matter of top priority.

Finally, I want to wish you all well. I know we all appreciate how vital it is that we adhere rigidly to the lockdown requirements in order to keep safe and well and I sincerely hope that this remains the reality for all.

I will continue to keep in regular contact.

Miss K M Higgins



Kathleen Higgins
Executive Headteacher