



## The Priory School

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Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to start with a very sincere thank you to all of you who have contacted school with your messages of thanks, support and feedback on our current provision, we have been overwhelmed with the volume and the sentiments you have expressed. We realise that the current circumstances are far from ideal and would like nothing better than to have all of our students with us but until that is possible we will continue to endeavour to provide the best experience possible for our young people. In turn, we would like to thank you for getting them, dressed, logged on and engaged. Attendance to lessons has been exceptional and this is no mean feat on your part, especially while many of you will be working from home; we do appreciate it.

Whilst I keep a record of all of the messages I receive from parents/ carers, Ofsted are often more interested in the entries made on their site: Parentview. If you have time to complete the short survey on the following link, we will be able to gather some useful feedback for our whole-school development. The link is on our website but I have also copied it here: <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>; it should only take a couple of minutes to complete. Many thanks in advance.

### Remote learning

We are continuing to provide each child's normal timetable of lessons and will be adding an extended tutor time to **Tuesday afternoon registration, which will now finish at 14.50pm**. This is so we can ensure we are keeping track of students' well-being whilst they work in isolation and will also allow for assemblies and messages to be fully shared.

We did encounter one or two instances of disruption to learning driven by a small number of students, especially in the initial stages of remote learning. Disappointing as this was, these have all been dealt with on an individual basis, and we have drawn together the **attached document to clarify our stance on behaviour and conduct during online learning**. **There is nothing to sign and return** and no change from our usual expectations but if I could ask you to read this through with your child(ren) so they are fully aware, that would be greatly appreciated.

We currently have a number of online resources and materials on our school website to support home learning and over the coming days we will be pulling these together under a new section entitled 'remote learning'. If you feel you need any support with regard to our provision or technical assistance to support your child then please do take a look. If your child is still struggling to access online learning because of ICT provision at home, please get in touch with Mrs Shaw, Assistant Headteacher.

So far, the majority of staff have been able to deliver lessons from school site but in order to keep in line with Government guidance to work from home where one can and to reduce unnecessary congestion on our roads as well as footfall through our building, more staff will now be working from home. Some, are also affected by Covid cases and school or early years setting closures and therefore cannot come into work. The Government has also directed children of keyworkers to stay at home where they can. I would ask that you are mindful of this over the coming weeks and that staff will always endeavour to

ensure lessons, are not interrupted but this may not always be possible, especially if they have young children.

Many parents have been in touch to praise the quantity and quality of remote lessons that Priory staff are providing for students. Whilst we are delighted that such high quality provision is in place, we do have to be mindful of screen time and subsequent wellbeing for those staff members who are teaching five lessons online a day plus registration. With this in mind, we are advising those staff who teach five periods of live lessons to make sure that they are creative in the way in which they plan these lessons to enable them at least some time during the day where their teaching is not screen focused.

Likewise, I am incredibly mindful of screen time for students. Whilst all lessons will start with a Teams introduction not all will require them to have their screens on all of the time. Please encourage them to make the most of this and take time away to work in their books or on paper, as directed. They will have their usual break time at 10.40 and 1pm, please ask them to step away from their screen and their room.

### **Year 11 and proposed changes to GCSE assessments**

On Friday, Ofqual issued their consultation document with regard to Year 11 final assessments. The proposals which are currently being tabled do include reference to teacher assessments and in some subjects (they don't say which ones) some short, exams set by the exam boards but marked internally. The full consultation document can be found at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>. It is lengthy but if you have time then please feel free to complete the survey held within the pages.

We will be submitting our own response on behalf of the school and if you would like to contribute to our feedback, we have extracted questions, which are particularly pertinent to parents and carers. Please complete the Form via the following link, as your feedback would be invaluable:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=X4pRTR73X0uDdSbvXs\\_1sS-JTdn5WN9Is712WYPZaIJUNzFSQIE2UTFQMEwxQjhTT1NRTIBPSjBYMS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=X4pRTR73X0uDdSbvXs_1sS-JTdn5WN9Is712WYPZaIJUNzFSQIE2UTFQMEwxQjhTT1NRTIBPSjBYMS4u)

With this consultation in mind and the understanding that we will probably not receive any further clarification before half term, we have decided to postpone the issuing of any more estimated grades for Year 11. This is simply because we need to make sure that any data that is shared, is meaningful for the students and without any knowledge of the weighting and process for the final exams, we cannot ensure they will be valid. We will be communicating with parents through Year 11 parents evening in February and Attitude to Learning grades will be issued, which will help to feedback about general progress, engagement and areas for focus.

### **Critical worker and vulnerable students in school**

It is genuinely wonderful, to still have students in school with us. I would just like to draw your attention to the link I sent earlier this week from the Department for Education:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/01/08/am-i-a-critical-worker-or-are-they-vulnerable-or-without-internet-access-or-broadband/>. We will continue to provide spaces in school but we do have large numbers and cannot always guarantee a 2 metre plus distance between students. If you feel your child could work from home then please do so. We will be issuing the registration form every two weeks.

### **Lateral Flow Testing**

This is the rapid testing schools were asked to set up to test staff and students, on site to look for people carrying Covid who may not be displaying symptoms. We have a very small but efficient test site set up in school and we have been able to test all students and staff currently working on site, who gave us permission. I would like to highlight that the testing, is staffed by our team, including our Student

Support mentors, matron, SENCO, Senior Leadership Team, admin and Science Technicians. They are all volunteers. Whilst we can manage small numbers, we will not be able to replicate this should school fully reopen and all cohorts return. With these restrictions in mind, only those students who are in school on a Wednesday, will be tested.

### **Wider School Life**

In an attempt to keep some normality of school life and ensure that pupils forget it isn't all about the lessons, we will be organising some alternative activities. School Parliament will meet virtually, this half term and Parliament reps will have a chance to gather their tutor groups' views during an extended tutor time. Online charity and fundraising events will start to appear, and as always PE are promoting the importance of physical activity to help boost students' mental and physical well-being. More details will follow so please ask students to look out for links and communication via Show my Homework and Teams.

### **Headteacher's Awards**

This is something I really enjoy. On a year group rotation, students are nominated by staff for Headteacher's Award, for a variety of reasons: sustained effort; being selfless or kind; showing initiative; achievements inside and outside of school. I get to sit (with a mask on and 2 metres away!) with small groups of students and talk to them about what they have been doing. They get to eat a Danish pastry and drink juice. In an attempt to retain this, we will be trialling it by Teams from this week and students will receive a voucher they can redeem in the school canteen once they return so they don't miss out on the food. Hopefully, technology won't let me down and I can still get to reward as many as possible over the coming weeks.

### **Virtual Library**

Our school librarian Mrs Edwards has kept our school library alive and if you would like to encourage your child's wider reading, away from lesson time please visit this phenomenal resource: [www.padlet.com/bookwizard/prioryvirtuallibrary](http://www.padlet.com/bookwizard/prioryvirtuallibrary) or via the school website - go to *Life At School/School Library/Priory Virtual Library*. It is our expectation that during lockdown, students are reading for a minimum of two hours a week; the benefits are endless.

### **Free School Meals Provision**

The Department for Education have been reviewing their Free School Meals provision. We decided to continue with our voucher system rather than the food parcels on offer, so, you will hopefully, have noticed no disruption. The government have promised access to a slightly different provider, which we should be able to log into by next week. The vouchers can be redeemed at all major supermarkets and more information will follow. If, you believe you may be eligible, for free school meals please go to our school website for further details.

As always, please stay in touch and hopefully by the second half of this term we will have all felt some impact of the mass vaccination programme as well as the benefits of spring approaching. I will continue to give you regular updates and hope that this can remain as focused on general school life, as possible.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Pope  
**Headteacher**