



The Priory School

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Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach half term I would like to thank you all for your continued support of your child(ren)'s remote learning. I realise it can simply be a challenge getting them up and downstairs in the morning, so the fact that we have such high participation and engagement in lessons is wonderful; it is very much appreciated by all at this end. In recognition of the amount of time staff and students have been spending in front of screens, this half term, we will be breaking up for the half term holiday **at midday on 12th February, rather than working until 2.30pm**. All need to log off by this point and school will be closed for the holiday period.

I will still be available for Covid Contact tracing at the start of the holiday period. If anyone in your household tests positive and your child has been onsite within 48 hours of either themselves or someone else testing positive or becoming symptomatic please contact us at info@tpstrust.co.uk. Once we are past Monday 15th February you will just need to engage with NHS test and trace. Thank you.

Parental survey

The Education Endowment Fund are running a parental survey to look at the impact of lockdown. <https://teachertapp.co.uk/the-big-lockdown-learning-parent-survey/>.

Every response goes towards important research that will help inform education policy over the next few years. If we reach 60 or more respondents from our parental body, the school will receive valuable feedback and a comparison against other schools taking part. I realise life is very busy but if you have five minutes I would be very grateful if you could complete it.

Potential return date

I realise you will all be aware of the announcement of 8th March as a potential date for a return to school. We are unlikely to receive any detail on this from the Department of Education until the end of the half term holiday. The Prime Minister stated we would be given a two weeks' notice of students returning to school. There are various scenarios being put forward on educational blogs and social media; this could involve a staggered return of year groups or a rota. We simply don't know and it will very much depend on case numbers, as well as the success of the government's vaccination programme. As soon as I have the detail and we have had time to digest it, I will contact you with our re-opening plan. I will also give you an update on any changes to our lateral flow testing which may be impacted by these announcements. For the moment it is paused for pupils unless a student is new to attending onsite provision.

Critical worker and vulnerable student provision on site

We will be sending the sign up request form for onsite provision by Wednesday 3rd February. This will cover not just next week but the week after half term. Please bear in mind we are currently running at full capacity in Year 7, 8 and 9. If students are able to work from home then they should please do so.

Communication with school

If you do need to contact us, or a teacher, could I ask you to do this via info@tpstrust.co.uk This email inbox is reviewed several times, each day and staff monitoring it will ensure your enquiry is signposted to the best person. Teachers are using Teams and Show my Homework with students but they are sometimes receiving 400 plus messages from students in a typical day, whilst they are also managing internal email traffic. I wouldn't want messages from you to be missed, and using info@ will help to avoid this. Our school reception is still manned every day, so please continue to use that too, especially if your child is attending their lessons onsite.

As part of our communication with yourselves and the local community we have always had a Twitter account. I would like to breathe more life into this and use it as a quick and easy way of highlighting some of the things we are still doing. It will be used to give weekly news updates highlighting specific articles from our newsletter and complementing our News section on the school website. I will also be using it to communicate messages around any potential school closure. Please follow us [@PriorySch](https://twitter.com/PriorySch) if you have a Twitter account.

Remote learning update

We are encouraging staff to be as creative as possible with the tasks and activities they set during this period of remote learning and you may start to see more lessons where work is set and explained and then students either report back with tasks and activities, rather than the teacher talking for most of the lesson. This is in response to student feedback as part of our monitoring of online provision as to the style of delivery they find the most effective, but also in an attempt to minimise screen time for all concerned.

Enrichment

In addition, you will have received a more detailed overview of our 'off screen' enrichment days, from Mrs Shaw, designed to add more creativity and depth to students' learning. These are activities they would have normally enjoyed as part of their time with us and we did not want to lose the opportunity to remind students that school should be about enjoying their learning whilst ensuring we support their overall well-being. They will include PE (please wear school PE kit), Art and World Book Day.

We are also working in partnership with Shrewsbury School to promote their online enrichment activities. There are a small number aimed at stretch and challenge which some Heads of Department may share with students. Feedback from those who have already attended has been very positive.

Thank you to Mrs Navio and our trainee Spanish teacher Mrs Smith for putting together a Spanish themed cooking challenge for staff and students with recipes every two weeks. This week is Paella. Information will be distributed to students; please let us have your photos for the school newsletter.

We will be launching our virtual version of Pro – our talent show, over the coming weeks. Please look out for details from Mr Austin and Miss Jones as and when these are published. It would be wonderful to see a high number of entries.

National Apprenticeship Week – 8th – 14th February 2021

Mrs France leads on our provision for careers and destinations guidance in school, and has put together a series of resources and activities to highlight this week for you all. Students will be exploring what apprenticeships are, finding out about the breadth of apprenticeships available and potential careers in their subject lessons. We are encouraging students to find out more in their own time too by logging onto Kudos <https://kudos.cascaid.co.uk/#/> to explore careers that interest them and listening to the interviews with local employers and apprentices at <https://vimeo.com/user119033917/albums>. A parental guide to apprenticeships is available on our website at <http://priory.tpstrust.co.uk/life-at-school/careers-work-experience/options-at-16>, scroll down to apprenticeships.

Year 8 Consultation Evening

I am aware that this is fast approaching. We are currently trialling our Year 11 parents evening via Teams. It is likely that Year 8 will take a similar format and we will be in touch with parents once we have reviewed how this worked.

Attitude to Learning Grades

For those Year groups (7, 8 & 10) who haven't received a recent report or parents evening, staff have written an extra attitude to learning report. We have adapted the wording of these to reflect the online aspect of work and should give you an indication of the level of engagement of your child over this half term.

Assistant Headteacher Appointment

I am pleased to announce that Mr Nick Bucknall has agreed to accept the permanent role of Assistant Headteacher, Student Welfare. Mr Bucknall has been carrying out this role since September as the result of Mrs Knight's promotion to Deputy, on a temporary basis. He knows our students well and is keen to drive forward our pastoral care and further develop our House System once restrictions ease.

I hope the forthcoming half term break gives you all time as a family to relax and unwind, or simply to have time away from computer screens. Hopefully as we approach Easter and the summer term we may be able to regain some sense of normality. As always please keep in touch with us, your support and feedback is invaluable.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Pope
Headteacher