



4 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Post Lockdown Update

Further to my letter dated 4 January 2021, the educational landscape has once again dramatically altered following the Prime Minister's most recent statement. I therefore feel it necessary to update you on some of the key issues affecting schools going forward. I understand the stress and anxiety that this may cause and it remains our highest priority to support students.

GCSE and A level Public Summer Examinations and January Vocational Examinations

One of the main announcements was the cancellation of the summer GCSE and A level examinations. It is clear that the summer examinations will not run in the format they would normally follow. However, what is not clear is what process will be implemented as a replacement for the full suite of external examinations. I must, therefore, urge all parents of Year 11 and 13 and students themselves to draw no conclusions about when courses will end or what they, and we, will be required to do in order to complete their studies and be awarded grades.

It remains likely that there will be some element of externally set assessment. It may also be the case that teachers will need to present some evidence of student work to demonstrate that final grades have been awarded accurately. We await confirmation of the exact nature of the process that will be implemented. Consequently, it is essential that all students in Years 11 and 13 continue to engage fully with their remote learning and in on-site learning when that is once again possible. Staff will prioritise real time guidance and advice sessions for students in these cohorts and we would ask for parental support to ensure that students follow their normal timetable, participate in all remote learning and complete all tasks set via Google Classroom by subject teachers.

Although the summer GCSE and A level examinations will not proceed, Vocational course examinations will proceed as planned in both the January window and in the summer term. Some students in Years 9–13 will be sitting Public Examinations in the week commencing 11 January and it remains the case that we strongly advise students who are doing so **to get a PCR test**. This should be done in the next two days to ensure the results are received and can be booked at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test, using the community testing option. After taking the test, students should then self-isolate before their Public Examination. If your child has had a positive test result in the last 6 weeks, they should **not** take a further test, as it may give a 'false positive' because of a previous infection. Please can you inform us by email, if this is the case.

As an additional measure, we will be checking temperatures before entering the Public Examination and any student who is running a fever will not be able to sit the examination and will need to be collected from the school site.



Headteacher Mr Ahson Mohammed, B.Ed. (Hons)

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Shirley Smears, B.Ed. (Hons), Mr Patrick Berry, BA (Hons), Mrs Charlotte Berry, BA (Hons)

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At time of writing, students may not have access to the full NIBS bus service for their journey to and from the examination. Should we receive any further update regarding the service, we will endeavour to share this via social media and on our website. Should student travel arrangements necessitate early arrival to, or late departure from school, we have the facility to accommodate examination candidates on site.

Cancellation of Year 11 and 13 PPEs

Whilst the external public examinations are still proceeding as planned, the PPE examinations planned for Years 11 and 13 during the course of January will now not take place.

Once we have received clarification about the timing and nature of the final examination/assessment from the government, we will review the position of the PPE examinations. If it proves necessary to reschedule these at a later date, we will do so and will of course inform parents/carers and students as soon as possible. Given the current national lockdown, it would not be appropriate to make any arrangements in this regard.

Remote Learning Provision

The announcement by the Prime Minister last night means that all students in all year groups will be engaged in remote learning via Google Classroom and Google Meet. I would ask all parents to ensure that students are engaging with their remote learning as they would a normal school day. Teachers will be delivering lessons according to the normal lesson timings of the school timetable. (These will be the pre-lockdown timings that have been posted in all year group Google classrooms in the last week of the autumn term and again this week). A remote learning checklist will be shared with students via Google Classroom and may also be found by visiting the student area of the school website:

<https://www.billericayschool.com/assets/Uploads/Files/Curriculum/Google-classroom-student-guide-desk-top.pdf>. Students are also reminded that if they have finished all set work, they may extend their learning by using the 'Home Access to Learning' resources available via the school website.

We understand that it can be difficult to motivate young people to engage in remote learning with the same level of engagement as in school learning, but we must work together in these unprecedented circumstances to counteract this; we would ask all parents to apply the same discipline and routines to attendance and school day timings as they normally would. In order for us to work proactively on this issue, we may need to issue the 'missing work notification' or the 'non-attendance to google meet session' notifications. These are purely to inform you as parents that a problem has arisen and you will know if that non-attendance or non-completion of work was due to connectivity or device access issues and in these instances no further action would be needed. Students should continue to let us know about issues with ICT, workload or wellbeing via their weekly check-in with their form tutor and we will endeavor to provide support.

We are also acutely aware that some families may have children in different year groups who all need access to Google Classroom at the same time. I would remind students and parents/carers that any Google Meet sessions can be accessed by any Wi-Fi enabled device and it may be the case that if one child in the household has priority for use of a computer, others can use their smartphones to access Google Meet sessions or check tasks and open resources. I would also remind you that whilst staff will set work via Google Classroom and will provide resources to support the completion of that work, it is absolutely acceptable for students, once they have accessed the materials online, to complete the work in their exercise books or on paper and to then capture an image of the completed work to upload to their Google Classroom.

Key Worker and Vulnerable Student On-site Provision

I appreciate that these new arrangements will have an impact on some parents and carers, particularly those that work during school hours. As in previous periods of lockdown or full remote learning provision, it remains the case that vulnerable children and the children of critical workers may access on-site provision, provided they are not required to self-isolate. Children with at least one parent/carer who is listed as a critical worker may apply for a place for on-site provision.

If you are a critical frontline worker, we would ask for you to carefully consider whether you do have an essential need for your child to remain in the school setting. If remote learning is possible for your child, it will help contribute to driving cases down in the community. If you have no alternative but to send your child into school to be supervised, please complete the form which can be found on our website.

Please note that students will be supervised to access the remote learning being provided by a subject teacher via Google Classroom and will not be in receipt of direct tuition.

Lateral Flow Testing

The government is committed to rolling out the mass testing programme as set out in my letter to you yesterday. I will update you on the progress of the implementation of this in due course. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many parents/carers who have kindly volunteered to assist with this programme and advise that you will be contacted in due course, should your services be required.

Thank you for your continued co-operation.

Yours sincerely



Mr A Mohammed, B.Ed.(Hons)
Headteacher