



Date: 22nd January 2021

Our Ref: MAS

Reply to: Mark Smith

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Dear Parent/Guardian

www.paigntonacademy.org

As we reach the midway point of this half-term, I continue to be very proud of my dedicated staff and the accomplishments of our students, we can celebrate that over 4000 remote lessons have been delivered.

Yesterday the Education secretary Gavin Williamson pledged to give schools two weeks notice of any re-opening and it was his hope to open schools again before Easter if possible. As always, these updates come to us at the same time as you, through the national media.

Remote Learning

We must congratulate our students on their positive engagement with all their live lessons so far. We do appreciate that spending many hours a day in front of a screen can be draining, therefore we are incorporating regular screen breaks throughout the day. At present we still believe live lessons are the most effective platform to ensure our students make the best possible progress in these difficult circumstances. However, moving forward there may be times where there will be a more blended approach to some lessons which may include more independent tasks.

Students must still continue to log on to their google meets for every lesson each day and still continue to submit work once it has been completed. As educators we feel that it is equally important to improve and build on our students' independent learning skills to prepare them for their future.

If your child needs a home learning exercise book to work in, they are available in reception at both sites for collection.

Testing centres

I am delighted to say that this week we began to train our volunteers. We are overjoyed at the high number of parents who stepped forward and I would like to say a huge thank you to all of these parents willing to give up their time to support our Academy Community.

Once again, all staff and students on site were tested and I am pleased to say we have recorded another 200 negative test results.

Where possible many of our support staff are working from home on a rota basis and we had one member of staff test positive yesterday at the Torquay Community test centre, however, this member of staff had not attended school since Thursday 14th January and did not develop any symptoms until mid way through this week.

When we do return to full time education, we will be testing all students and therefore, please can you, if you have not done so already, complete the permission form using the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeuwMlwLBUPOr8FYxPUewhdv-g955_R6IA5r05Gf026AZ_CUg/viewform

FSM

All parents with a child eligible for FSM will have received a £15 voucher to cover this week. We are likely to send the next three weeks worth of vouchers in one upload next week and this will arrive via email or text through Wonde.

Please note, any children who are attending school will receive their FSM lunches in school so these parents will not receive vouchers.

For Year 9 parents / guardians - Important date for the diary:

Virtual Year 9 Parents' Evening for Borough Road - 4th February 2021

Virtual Year 9 Parents' Evening for Waterleat Road – 11th February 2021

Today you will have received a letter containing information on how to make parent evening appointments, the system will be live from 5pm this evening (22nd January).

Please note: Due to the current climate and with the majority of students not being in the Academy, we have decided to delay the Year 9 Option choices until after the Easter holidays. Option choices are an exciting time for all Year 9 students, as they can now tailor their education around what they enjoy, their strengths and aspirations. Further information will be sent nearer the time.

Supporting Students

Please find below a detailed update from Mr Godfree on all the efforts undertaken to support positive Mental Health, we are committed to supporting our students and parents, there is a link that might be of use to parents.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and loyalty,

My best wishes to you and your family, as always if we can help in anyway, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Mark Smith
Head of School

Student Wellbeing Information - Mr Godfree

We recognise these can be challenging times for us all however we are determined to deliver a balanced curriculum which also considers the students well-being. Please find below an overview of all the well being support offered to all students at the Academy.

All students were asked to complete a survey last week during PSHE lessons asking for their opinion following the introduction of online lessons. Taking on board student feedback we have adapted the timings of the day, extending morning break and adding breaks between lessons to minimise screen time.

This week during PSHE lessons, students have been discussing their wellbeing and completing a survey based around their current mental health and wellbeing. This survey is repeated every 2 - 3 weeks as it is crucial for staff to gain the students perspective to ensure we are supporting the students in the correct manner and picking up on any patterns that are emerging. From the surveys, students receive an email explaining the findings and action points to help support them further.

We have been exploring the Student @ Paignton Academy webpage which can be accessed via the main school web site during PSHE lessons this week. The web page is designed to give students a plethora of information, help buttons, challenges and activities. It also has a 'Staying safe and Wellbeing' tab which offers wellbeing tips and strategies including Mindfulness audio recordings.

Please do feel free to explore this webpage with your son/ daughter.

<https://www.paigntonacademy.org/student-life-paignton-academy/>

Every student has been invited to join a *Wellbeing Google Classroom group* for the year they are in. Wellbeing updates are constantly added to this page. The students have been exploring these during PSHE lessons this week.

Could we ask that you help to promote the idea of your son/ daughter keeping to a routine where they are receiving regular exercise, time away from any screens and upkeep their personal hygiene on a daily basis.

The following link is from the Anna Freud National Centre for Children & Families Mentally Healthy Schools programme. It offers simple advice and guidance to parents and guardians on how to make conversations with their child regarding their everyday feelings.

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/youre-never-too-young-to-talk-mental-health-tips-for-talking-for-parents-and-carers/>