



The Featherstone Academy

13 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you and your family well.

I would like to firstly thank you and our students for your continued support and patience during these challenging times. All academy staff are working tirelessly to ensure students are still learning whether it be at home or in the school building.

Blended Learning

The announcement of a national lockdown, until at least February half term, has highlighted the importance of students accessing our blended learning provision. Our remote education provision consists of live video lessons, pre-recorded video lessons and on-line resources. As an academy we want to encourage all students to participate. To help you understand what is expected for our students, below is the government guidance on teaching pupils remotely:

We expect schools to:

- set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects.
- provide teaching that is equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. This will include both recorded or live direct teaching time and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently, and will be as a minimum for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, 5 hours a day.

We recognise that not all children in a household have access to a device and therefore following the delivery of 28 laptops from the government (this figure is far less than we were promised) we have identified, prioritised and delivered devices to our Year 10 and 11 students. The government have recently announced that we will receive more laptops to support remote learning, therefore we will distribute these once we receive them.

In addition to this, our Pastoral team were out in the community last week delivering additional resources to our Year 10 and 11 students to supplement their remote learning on Microsoft Teams.

Year 10 and 11 Exams

As you will be aware, the government announced that exams for Year 11 students will not go ahead in their current format. We have not had any further information at this point however it is important that students continue to complete all of the work set by their teachers as this might be used in the future to support assessment and evidence processes.

Critical Workers

When the Prime Minister confirmed the decision to close schools, he explained it was because “they act as vectors for transmission, causing the virus to spread between households.” With this in mind, it is clear that the safest place for your child is at home. Not only is it the safest place, it is also essential that they remain at home in order to reduce mixing and the transmission of this disease between households.

If you qualify as a Critical Worker, but can manage to have your child or children at home, I would urge you to do this. Government guidance published on 7th January supports this point - "Parents and Carers who are Critical Workers should keep their children at home if they can".

Lateral Flow Testing

The academy is now in a position to deliver lateral flow testing and will be doing this as part of any future 'phased return'.

Testing is not compulsory but parents and carers of children aged under 16 years, will need to consent to their child having the weekly tests, completing the form available on the academy's website. Students wishing to be tested when they return to school should return with a completed consent form.

Safeguarding

Whilst our students are learning from home it is still our responsibility to safeguard all our students. Your child(ren) are being sent a welfare email from their form tutors on a Monday morning, could we highlight the importance of students replying to these emails and also been in attendance for their daily registration Teams meeting with tutors.

Free School Meals

During the national lockdown, the government expect schools to continue supporting children eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are at home during term time. The academy will be in contact with families eligible for free school meals to arrange for vouchers to be provided.

Big Magic Breakfast

We have managed to secure the provision of the Big Magic Breakfast again for this year, further details on this scheme and how to access the provision will follow.

If you have any questions, please contact admin@featherstone.academy. We will continue to send weekly updates throughout the lockdown period.

Thank you again for your understanding in what is a very difficult situation for everyone.

Yours sincerely



Mr W Bush
Principal