



3 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

This will be a longer than usual letter as it contains some important information. We have tried to indicate this with headers so please feel free to skim the sections that are not relevant to you. However, can I first take the opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and positivity. The sense of community we are seeking to maintain is only strengthened by your continued communication and support. It means the world to the staff to know that somehow the juggling we are all doing to sustain this is largely working and appreciated.

Equally we highly appreciate the support from home to keep students engaged. Whenever we come out of this, there will be a real risk that the students who were not maintained in their contact with education will be disadvantaged. The more we can keep them in touch with learning and in routines of educational activity the better for their long term education and their well-being at this time.

Key Workers and Easter provision

We remain closed as a school to all apart from those who are booked in as provision for Key Workers. This is now in place and those to whom this applies will receive separate communication with details.

Home Learning

We hope the adjustment to amounts of work this week has meant that it is manageable for all. There is no reason why those who finish and want more cannot extend but we are keen this is a long term approach which allows everyone to continue to learn, have routines and stay safe.

We are also conscious that most parents are not teachers and have jobs of their own, this is home *learning* not home schooling! All students should therefore be using and checking Firefly as well as their school emails every day. Heads of Year and Pastoral Managers will still be checking in with them regularly and will escalate concerns if there is no contact. Nobody minds if there are delays or difficulties to resolve with the tasks set but we need regular communication to assure us that students remain safe, well and get any help they need.



There will be no work set over Easter and any deadlines set that coincide with the Easter holidays will have been set in error. It is important that students and staff all have a break from the intensity of home learning over this fortnight. A reminder that no new work will be set on Monday 20 April as staff will be planning the learning schemes for Term 5. However, students are expected to log in and make sure they are up to date with all previous work and get ready to be back in the swing of things for the next term.

Year 10, 11 and 13 Update

At the time of writing we have only just received information from Ofqual on how grades for this summer's exams are to be determined in practice and in detail. It will take a while to unpick the detail and how it applies to our cohorts. However, we can now update on our position with regard to the working patterns for Year 10, 11 and 13.

For Year 10, on first impression the proposal seems to be that they are not to be awarded grades this summer although this is to be consulted upon. Therefore, whilst we explore the fine details and respond to consultation all Year 10 students should continue to work as directed, as everything carries on for them until we know more. The College position is that this proposal will disadvantage the current Year 10 in their final year next year and so we will be lobbying through consultation to this effect.

For Year 11 and 13 as of the Easter break we will mostly cease setting lesson-by-lesson work. For a small number of subjects (Year 11 DT, Photography, Year 13 Art, Photography, Psychology, Sociology and Spanish) there will be a short window of 2 weeks where work will be made available for students to complete the content of the course. This should only be undertaken by those who are seeking to continue studying the subject at A Level or Degree level where the knowledge will be required for further progression. Completion of this work will not be related to any assessment of predicted grades.

We will be reviewing the latest set of predicted grades, correlating it to previous years and students starting points. We will contact individual students and parents where we have concerns but do not feel that continuing to set assessed work at this stage will provide any greater benefit than we already have. Well done to all for what they have done already, they have responded really well to what was asked of them by teachers.

Please do not approach individual teachers or Curriculum Leaders to ask about current predictions. The advice from Ofqual and exam boards is now very clear that schools should not be sharing any data related to this with students or parents. They are still very much a work in progress. Most students will have an awareness of the levels they have been working at but staff have had to combine this with any practical work that exists as well as a professional judgement about the likely outcome in examination. This will be a complex task and will be moderated in College as well as by the exam boards at a national level. We will communicate more on this as and when we are able.

UCAS and Universities UK will provide advice as soon as possible in response to today's government announcement regarding A levels and GCSEs. UCAS have extended the date for confirming Firm and Insurance choices to 19 May 2020. The Sixth Form Team will communicate directly with Year 13 students and parents with further detail and guidance.

However, we do believe that Year 11 and 13 are still very much our students and still under our care. Therefore, a range of measures will commence in the first or second week back. For those students looking to move into A Level study with us or elsewhere we will make available wider reading that aids the transition for each subject. Closer to taster day there will also be a piece of work set that will help teachers gauge the understanding of students who may be starting the courses in September. It will be really good for them to get a head start on the next stage.

For students who are looking to transition to college or employment we will signpost relevant careers information and resources that will also help ease that move and set them up well for the next steps.

Reports and Parents Evenings

We will be issuing Year 10 reports to parents today and feedback in lieu of Year 10 Parents' Evening. This provides a model that we can utilise for any future parents' evenings which will aim to provide an outline of the course and content covered, general feedback and specific areas for improvement. We will communicate with each year group as it becomes relevant next term.

Staffing Updates

We are very fortunate at Heathfield that we do not have many staffing changes mid-year. However, this year has presented all kinds of challenges for us all. For completely understandable reasons Ms Kraus will be returning to Germany to live closer to her family. Therefore, after Easter, Science classes that had Ms Kraus will be redistributed within the Science department and will be notified about their new teacher. I am sure you all join with me in thanking Ms Kraus for the fantastic contribution she made to the Science department, she will be sadly missed by us all. I am personally saddened by the circumstances under which she felt she had to leave, Ms Kraus had lived in the UK for 20 years, trained with us and was a much valued member of staff. I know that I speak for all staff and governors when I wish her the very best.

We are also delighted to welcome back Ms Sugden from her maternity leave, we know she is keen to reconnect with students. Finally, we wish Mrs Hewitt well with her maternity leave and welcome Mrs Linehan who will be taking some English classes after Easter.

Financial Updates

Free School Meals

As a College we have taken the decision to fund the provision of Free School Meals through our own voucher scheme over Easter. Whilst the government have now launched their scheme it does not provide for the Easter break and will take some time to set up, therefore we have continued with our own scheme for the next 4 weeks and will be in touch with families as and when we move over to the government provision.

Library Quiz

Please be assured that we are working hard to find a way to refund payments made for the library quiz. Unfortunately, as the original payments for the quiz were made by cash and not via the School Gateway, this is not an option for refund. We thank you for your patience while we find the solution for this. Please be assured that the money will be returned to you, but there may be some delay.

Cashless Catering

We are aware that many Year 11 and Year 13 students have remaining balances on their Cashless Catering accounts. We would aim under the current circumstances to transfer to siblings wherever possible. Where sibling transfer is not possible we will be working over the next couple of weeks to make sure all balances above £2.50 are refunded. However, due to the costs, but also the time incurred to process a refund, we would be grateful if you would consider donating a balance of *less than* £2.50 to our Supporters of Heathfield Community College Fund. If you would like your balance of £2.50 or below returned to you, please let us know by email finance@heathfieldcc.co.uk before **24 April 2020**, otherwise it will be donated to SOHCC.

Cancelled Trips and Enrichment Week

Thank you for your patience and consideration while we work towards finding solutions for our cancelled trips. We continue to follow County guidance, which requests schools to cancel school trips and make individual claims per trip to our Insurers, who in turn review each claim on the basis of its own circumstances. I am sure you can all appreciate that this is a timely process which requires a systematic approach. It is vital that we provide them with detailed evidence in order to try and secure full refunds for any costs that have been incurred. In addition, this process is being hindered by many educational trip providers working remotely or currently being closed, this is adding to the delay in communication and subsequent claims being submitted.

The current priority is to claim refunds on any cancelled trips that were scheduled to take place during Term 4 and 5. Once we have received funds back, through either a refund from providers or through insurance claims, we will be able to begin to release funds back to individuals. Our Finance department will be in contact with parents to arrange for money to be transferred when the funds are available. Please bear with us at this time and wait to be contacted by the team.

Finally, in terms of Enrichment Week activities, we have already communicated that trips abroad during that week have been cancelled and that we decided to suspend further payment of deposits until the position on insurance becomes clearer. This decision is now being reviewed to include all Enrichment Week activities. As a result, once we have resolved the refunds for trips cancelled during Terms 4 and 5, we will then begin to prioritise trying to claim refunds for those trips which have already required deposits to trip providers. We thank you for your continued patience and support.

Online Safety

We are fortunate that our students are used to managing themselves online due to the iPad scheme. However, we would remind that the iPads are subject to our College monitoring software whereas the smart phones they have at home may not have restrictions on and they will be experiencing much more time with those devices close at hand. There is a lot of support available to keep your child safe online. Below are some useful links to help parents and carers:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)

And finally if I can share some good news? As we know there are many routes to greatness, it is good to know the sheer quality of our students' shines through regardless of circumstance. After a gruelling 5 stage process we are thrilled for Eleanor Dawson in Year 13 who has secured a prestigious Technology Degree Apprenticeship with JP Morgan and Exeter University, which will provide her with a BSc (Hons) in Digital and Technology Solutions. The process involved application, phone interview, assessment centre, "Insights" evening event/interview and a video interview (normally face to face). This is hugely impressive and we congratulate Eleanor on her hard work and well deserved outcome.

So all that remains is for me to wish you a very Happy Easter, we attach with this letter some suggested activities which are completely optional but might help if you have run out of ideas at home.

Stay safe, stay home where you can and we will be back in touch on Monday 20 April for Term 5.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C Barlow', written in black ink.

MS C BARLOW
Headteacher