



24 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

It has been an absolute pleasure to be back in touch with our school community and see students responding this week. As we reach the end of our first week back to Term 5 I am in a position to update you on a few issues and thank you again for your continued positive communication and support. As previously, this letter attempts to combine several areas of information, we will not be offended if you only read the sections that apply to you!

### College Reopening

You may have seen the reports in last weekend's papers about schools reopening. At the risk of being bold I will state that I find this kind of political "kite flying" unhelpful from politicians and journalists. It has worried families and led to a week of clarifications and statements from the DfE and from teaching unions. The position from myself and our governors is clear. We will only reopen to more students when it is safe to do so. That will be after a carefully considered set of risk assessments that cover all aspects of the College, our context and our students. We are desperately keen to see our students again and re-establish our wonderful learning community but not at the expense of the health and safety of our students, our staff or the wider community.

### Home Learning

We appreciate how difficult it must be at times for parents with different ages of children to be able to manage learning from home and balance it with work, many of us are also trying to manage it too! We are trying everything we can to make it as simple as possible but, as always, we are keen to refine and improve where possible. There are some reminders that might help:

- For all technical and IT queries please contact [itsupport@heathfieldcc.co.uk](mailto:itsupport@heathfieldcc.co.uk), by all means let the teacher know there are issues but the support team are there and available to help.
- We do not expect you to be the teacher! If students are stuck or not sure, it is important **they** contact the teacher for help - that provides useful feedback to the teacher and ensures the student stays in control of their own learning. A reminder that they (or you if you feel the need) should use Firefly (or Google classrooms) to communicate back to the teacher. That keeps it centred on one platform and is simpler to manage, reducing email traffic.



- As we move into a longer period of home learning we are considering methods of expanding our teaching provision. Online live lessons have an immediate obvious appeal but are fraught with safeguarding issues if not managed effectively by all involved. We are aware of some very real problems associated with this. We will be looking to pilot the practice with a view to training more staff as applicable.
- We have reissued guidance to staff to ensure the amount of work and spacing of deadlines is clearly set out in the instructions. They may set more than one lesson in a single Firefly entry but it should be clearly stated what is due when, so it does not appear too overwhelming.
- It is possible some students may “finish” early - this is fine if the teachers are happy with what they have done, then it is important they have room for physical exercise if possible, relaxation and time with family.

The additional tasks we are sending via [homelearning@heathfieldcc.co.uk](mailto:homelearning@heathfieldcc.co.uk) or via Twitter @Heathfield\_cc are purely optional and help to create a sense of community and fun. We have relaunched this term the House Weekly Quiz and look forward to sharing the results on Friday as well as weekly challenge themes.

We would value your feedback by completing this online survey to help us understand how we can continue to improve or even understand what we are getting right so we can do more of it! [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11JjwUeBi5BBzuX56-KMq3m1ftiEP-FxLkN5HbjKK\\_A/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11JjwUeBi5BBzuX56-KMq3m1ftiEP-FxLkN5HbjKK_A/edit)

Through it all we try to stay positive, kind and balanced in our responses. We are still our much valued community; we are Heathfield!

### **GCSE and A-Level Grading 2020**

Ofqual (the regulator of exam and assessments in England) launched a consultation on 15/4/20, detailing the arrangements for issuing students with grades in Summer 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/exceptional-arrangements-for-exam-grading-and-assessment-in-2020>).

In summary, schools will need to give exam boards:

- A calculated grade for every subject
- A rank order within that grade (so that the exam boards can see which students are the strongest grade 5, weakest grade 5 etc)

All grades will be subject to a national standardisation, meaning that a calculated grade for a student may be adjusted. Students will have the opportunity to appeal if they feel that they have received the wrong grade. However, Ofqual have stated that this will be a factual check on whether or not the College/exam board have issued the correct grade; it will not review the professional judgements made to inform a grade decision. Any student that is unhappy with the outcome of an appeal will have the opportunity to take exams during Autumn 2020.

As a College, we have issued detailed guidance for all Departments to ensure that (a) this process is consistent across all subjects and (b) that decisions relating to calculated grades and rank order are as secure as possible.

The decisions regarding calculated grades will be made using as wide an evidence base as possible, including: mock exam performance, coursework/non-examined assessment, classwork. Decisions will also be informed by teachers' professional judgement about the progress that students normally make between March and May/June. As directed by Ofqual, teachers will not use any evidence produced by students after 20/3/2020 (when all schools in England closed). Students/parents cannot provide teachers with any additional evidence.

Importantly, the College cannot respond to any requests from students/parents about calculated grades or rank ordering. Ofqual have stated that this would be classed as serious malpractice.

### **Ofqual Consultation**

The processes described above refer to Year 11 and Year 13 students. Following pressure from school leaders, Ofqual have now said that this will apply to Year 10 students who are also entered for examinations this summer. However, this is still subject to confirmation following the consultation published on 15 April. This consultation will close on Wednesday 29 April 2020 so we would urge all interested parties to engage if they wish to. Details are on our website <http://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?p=1936767>. Guidance is also available on our website to provide support for what might seem a complex form.

### **Transition for Year 11 and 13**

As we stated in our letter just before Easter, work for Year 11 and 13 will tail off now in the first weeks of Term 5 as all courses finish. We turn our attention to supporting Year 11 and 13 as they transition to their next stages of education. For Year 11 we will aim to provide a range of resources.

- For those starting courses in the 6th Form there will be transition materials from each subject. This will allow students to engage with the subjects they are thinking of starting in September, reading, podcasts, websites, films and more to start the process of moving into A Level. We will be launching these from Monday 4th May direct to students and signposted from the website.
- We are also in dialogue with the Post 16 colleges who are aiming to communicate directly with students and parents about transition materials for the courses starting in September.
- We are also excited about a partnership with Wealden Works for those who are still undecided about their next steps. They are developing an online programme for students focused on employability skills and awareness which will support those who may be seeking an apprenticeship or simply are not sure yet.
- The aim is that all possible options are available from 4th May but we are in communication with partners for the aspects we do not directly control.

For Year 13 a detailed letter explaining all the necessary next steps and opportunities will be sent by the 6th form team this week. It will include wide ranging information from accepting offers at university; preparing to study and course content; preparing to live independently and budgeting. Additionally, we will be signposting information on preparing for apprenticeship and employment.

## Year 10 Prefects

On Friday 1 May 2020 we will be launching the application process for Prefects 2020 for students in Year 10. All information will be sent to Year 10 students via email and the deadline for this application will be Monday 18 May 2020, if you have any queries please contact Miss Clarke at [kclarke@heathfieldcc.co.uk](mailto:kclarke@heathfieldcc.co.uk) .

## Well-being Support

The College is running its usual well-being package for students which has been updated this week. Parents are also free to engage with this and resources are available on Firefly. Additional materials and support links are signposted on our Covid-19 Information page <http://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?p=1936767>. Active Sussex have teamed up with REBOOT, providing young people and their families access to local sports and activities, directly into your homes. Please [click here](#) to view this week's schedule. They are also launching the Virtual School Summer games, the whole family can get involved and we attach details to this letter.

## Update on Financial Issues

Thank you to parents who have responded regarding funds remaining on cashless catering for Year 11 and 13 students. As per the feedback we will now start to process refunds where requested, if above £2.50, or transfer to sibling accounts where possible. This may take some time as we work out the most effective way of refunding the amounts. Our Finance team will be in touch in due course.

We continue to process cancellation of trips and reclaiming deposits. Once we receive the full amount for all aspects of a trip we will start the process of refunding to parents as per our previous letter (3 April 2020). This continues to be a work in progress and as soon as we are able to contact you with more details our Finance team will be in touch.

## Parents' Evenings

During this term Year 7 and Year 9 Parents' Evenings would have been taking place. Owing to the fact we cannot hold these in the traditional sense we will be sending feedback to parents and carers regarding where students are and what they should be working on this term. For students in Year 9 more specific targets for improvement will also be given for the two option subjects due for completion in Year 10. Teachers will be continuing to provide feedback as per the guidance above to support students learning from home.

As always, we are very appreciative of your patience, positivity and understanding as we negotiate this term. Every family and every school will approach this differently and will experience it differently. There is no "right" or "better" way. I am very proud of our community and our ethos, students will benefit from routine and staying connected to learning, from being safe and loved. We will all benefit from being kind, to ourselves and each other. We will navigate each phase as it comes and will communicate with you as openly as possible at each stage.

Yours sincerely



**MS C BARLOW**  
Headteacher

