



Tuesday 21st April 2020

## Start of Summer Term summer update for families

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

First of all, I hope you are all well and that those who managed to get a break over the last two weeks enjoyed it, though I know it was a very different Easter this year.

I am aware that I have a great deal of information to share with you in this letter. A separate letter is going out to Year 11 students and parents at the same time as this one. If you are in Year 11 or your child is, please do also read the rest of this letter too.

### Our approach to online learning

Thank you to those who have been in touch both to say thanks for the online lessons via Google Classroom and those who have pointed out things they would like to change, or areas for improvement. I am glad that engagement is high on the whole. We also know that as time goes by we will need to do things a little differently to keep interest going.

I have considered, with my team, the range of views we have heard and our plans contained in this letter are our best way forward for the time being, also considering that parent views vary from wanting little structure to as much structure as possible.

For this week, our offering largely stays the same, with lessons set as per the normal timetable on a daily basis. The exceptions are Years 11 & 13 (please see the table below).

You will start to see more **voiceover slideshows** posted to Google Classroom in the next days and weeks as our main way of providing more precise explanation to students. This will particularly be the case where there are elements of new content.

Another key aspect of our approach moving forward is to recognise that **one size does not fit all** and to vary our approach for different year groups. We want to ensure that the approaches we are adopting are effective. Do bear with us as we are all trying to learn the best ways to support remote/ home learning under this lock down period whilst recognising that each family will be working under different and often, very difficult circumstances.

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| Year 13 | Our 6th Form team spent a great deal of time up to the deadline of yesterday to submit all pieces of internal assessment to the IB. The IB will now decide upon calculated grades based on this work.<br>As such, the course is now completed (study leave would have begun for the final exams imminently).<br>No further lessons will therefore be set on Google Classroom for Year 13 IB students. We will |
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|                            | <p>be writing separately with details of activities you can undertake which will provide good preparation for university and will keep in contact regarding the results and university admission process.</p> <p>For BTEC students, we are still awaiting advice about how the awarding bodies will decide upon the calculated grade. In the meantime, please follow the instructions of your teachers on what work you need to do (if any), on an individual basis.</p>   |
| Year 11                    | <p>Year 11 is in a similar position to Year 13. The course has now in effect ended and teachers must turn their attention to moderating the centre assessed grades for GCSE (see below for more details).</p> <p>Our approach is therefore to ask Year 11 to focus upon two things from now on: developing wider knowledge; preparing for courses next year. Much more detail on this is contained within the accompanying letter for Year 11 families. Lessons will not be posted onto Google Classroom following the usual timetable from tomorrow onwards.</p>  |
| Year 12<br>Year 10         | <p>Our approach with these year groups will be to retain the current daily timetable, with activities posted daily. We are conscious that students in these year groups are missing teaching in school during their exam courses.</p> <p>I have therefore asked our teachers to put particular focus upon keeping in touch with students in these year groups and checking in where work is not submitted or well understood.</p>  |
| Year 9<br>Year 8<br>Year 7 | <p>As of next week work will still be set on a daily basis, but we will be adopting a revised timetable (to be confirmed and shared as soon as possible).</p> <p>Our aim is to provide a better balance of subjects and activities each day, e.g. between work on screen and work away from a screen. We also want to acknowledge the wider activities students are involved in, including daily PE (e.g. PE with Joe). There will be a mix of daily activities and a menu of wider activities to be done over a longer period.</p> <p>We wish to maintain the structure many families prefer, with an element of flexibility many others have asked for. All in all, we want to see more coherent days with a better balance each day and through the week.</p> |

From next week we will also begin to hold small online group sessions where tutors can speak to students about how they are getting on with their learning. We are finalising the platform we will use. When we start this we will begin with a small number of groups so that we can make sure that this format works before it is adopted more widely. This is in addition to the work we have already been doing to keep in touch with students, some of whom get more regular contact for particular reasons, e.g. special educational needs.

Teachers have also been advised to use the United Learning bank of video lessons and those from the new Oak National Academy where these fit in with the units we are running.

I hope that these steps illustrate a developing approach which we will, of course, keep under review.

### **Some further notes about Centre Assessed Grades - Years 11, 13 and Year 10 Latin and Greek**

Further to my letter on the last day of term, Ofqual have now published a guide to how Centre Assessed Grades will work, but this is also a consultation document with a very tight deadline of the end of this week. As such, the contents are provisional, though in honesty they are unlikely to change much. If you would like to read through the proposed methodology, please click [here](#)

Year 13 IB students will have their grades calculated through a separate IB process. The Government has now also asked Ofqual to put together a system for calculating grades for BTEC courses and we are waiting to hear what this will look like - this affects Year 13 Business, Year 13 Health & Social Care and BTEC PE courses in Year 11.

The document from Ofqual reiterates that we as a school will have to retain strict confidentiality over the process of submitting Centre Assessed Grades to awarding bodies. We will not therefore be able to discuss this process with students or their parents. I am sure I can count on your support in this.

We will send a Frequently Asked Questions document to you soon. In the meantime, may I reassure you of the following:

- We will consider what would happen in an exam series should every student have had the benefit of the remaining revision time and the usual increases we see in performance between March mocks and final results
- We will be not be sticking rigidly to the last predicted grade or the mock grade but will be applying professional judgement given the widest knowledge we have of each student's work and the improvement they have been making
- We will be 'sense-checking' grades against previous school performance, which is high in the vast majority of subjects
- We will consider how we would have put in additional support in the 'missing time' for anyone who had missed study time and the effect this would have, as well as the effect of any access arrangements, such as extra time.

For those in Year 10 studying Latin or Greek, my last letter directly to you reflected Ofqual's intention that you not be given a grade through this process. The position on this - though still provisional - has changed. May I ask that you get in touch with Mrs Dix directly to let her know whether you would wish to be awarded a grade this summer (if this idea is confirmed) or whether you would prefer to continue to study and sit the exam at some point in Year 11? Email: [adix@cap.education](mailto:adix@cap.education)

Questions about this process can be directed to Mr Crane, though it would help us if families could wait to first read the FAQ document we are preparing.

### **Access to technology**

My following question may seem odd in an email letter, but I am conscious that many parents access these on their mobile phones whilst perhaps struggling with wifi and devices for their children to do work on. **Are you struggling with online learning at home due to lack of a device and/or issues in connecting to the internet?** If so, we may be able to help - please let me know.

### **Help for critical workers**

We remain open for the children of critical workers. If you are a critical worker and are struggling **at all** to balance working with looking after your children, please let me know.

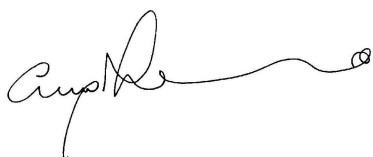
### **Wider help**

If anyone is struggling, with buying food, or with a domestic situation, and you don't know who to turn to, please contact me or one of our senior staff and we will put you in touch with someone who can help, in confidence.

Thank you for your continued support at this time. Everyone at Parkside is eager to see students back at school when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we will keep supporting one another and developing what we do to provide learning at home. Whilst remote learning is not perfect and not a substitute for being at school, all of us here feel proud of the efforts our students are making.

We will be in touch again this week with news of our first virtual assemblies where we aim to focus on some of the most important things - most important of all at the moment of course, is staying safe and sticking together.

With every best wish,



Craig Morrison

