



Dear Parents/Carers,

WEEKLY UPDATE

Following our first full week of closure, and as the country comes to terms with the lock down situation, it is clear that the measures that have been taken are vitally important as we navigate our way through these uncertain times.

Firstly, I would like to thank one of our Y13 students, James Fletcher who alerted me to the need for eye protection for NHS staff in Chester. As a result, we were able to donate over 200 pairs of safety goggles that were laying idle in our science laboratories due to the closure. I am pleased that we were able to support our community at such a difficult time and hope that they go some way to protect our NHS staff as they risk their lives for all of us. James collected the safety specs on Monday, and they are now where they are best needed.

I am extremely pleased the sensible approach parents and carers are taking in supporting their children to engage with study whilst in the safety of their own home. Our Resource Hub is proving very popular with students as there are hundreds of hits daily and staff are reporting positive dialogue with students about work set. As you know, work outlined in the Hub is updated weekly to give students a rolling two week scheme across all subjects. However, working from home is not the same as being in the school environment and therefore a mixture of school based activities with downtime and family time is very important. Thank you for your support.

There has been some communication with examination authorities regarding the awards of GCSE and A Level qualifications this week however, there has been nothing confirmed yet as to how awards will be made. It is likely to be a mixture of data held by school, prior attainment at KS2 and evidence of current working. I expect to have more detailed information next week.

Since my last update there are a number of things I would like to highlight to parents and carers. I apologise for the length of the update however it contains important information from school and from Cheshire West and Chester LA:

Sixth Form Update

Year 11 into 12 update: The closing date for applications for a place in Year 12 from September 2020 close today, Friday the 3rd of April. In the coming days and weeks, parents, carers and students all need to keep a close check on e-mail communication, the Hub and Twitter in order to receive Sixth Form updates. Conditional offers will be put together in due course but remember a final decision on a place in the Sixth Form cannot be made until final GCSE examination grades are decided. If you have any questions or queries regarding anything Sixth Form related, please contact Miss R Hughes via e-mail: rhughes@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk.

Emails to school

We encourage students to keep in touch with their teachers during this period of home learning but please be mindful that although our staff are still working there may be cases where individuals become unwell and are unable to respond. Therefore, any urgent messages should be sent via the school central email address whitby@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk

Careers

Miss Connor has asked me to remind students to check their email for Careers related items. If they have any questions, please email her direct aconnor@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk

Wellbeing

It is important in these exceptional times that young people and their families ensure they prioritise their wellbeing and mental health. There is a lot of good advice available online at present, from the BBC and other outlets. Our school website wellbeing page has good links to websites promoting strategies and offering constructive advice <http://www.whitbyhigh.org/mentalhealth.html>. There is also an excellent section on wellbeing within our Resource Hub. Keeping routines close to usual can be beneficial for young people's wellbeing so bedtimes and getting up should be as close to normal as possible with regular work, meal and recreation times. Mobile phones may well be particularly important to keep in touch with friends and family at this time though they should not be overused and put away whilst students are working. Parents and carers should continue to be vigilant about their children's appropriate and safe use of technology and social media.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Safeguarding

Where there is a serious concerns about a child, guidance, including how to make a referral can be found on the Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://www.cheshirewestscp.co.uk/>

Keeping children safe online

The government has updated the information for parents and carers to include a section on keeping children safe online. It provides links to online resources that will help support parents and carers in keeping their children safe online. Full details can be found in section 6.3 of the guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Home Learning Resource Hub

We've had a huge number of students and parents/carers accessing our Resource Hub which is fantastic! Students and parents/carers can access it here

<https://sites.google.com/whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk/twhs-resource-hub/home>

Please do not try to access it through the school system, just click straight onto this link or go to www.whitbyhigh.org, then click a red tile called 'Home Learning' and 'Home Learning' again.

Here you will find the learning plans for each subject and all of the instructions. If they are asked for usernames and passwords for any google drives or google classrooms, they must use their school email address and their usual school password, and it will let them in. This will work on a phone, tablet or computer.

You might receive emails from staff letting you know that your son/daughter hasn't accessed their work yet. Please be assured that this is not intended to add any pressure to what we know is already a stressful time but is just to let you know so that you can give them a nudge at home.

As well as the learning plans on the Resource Hub there are lots of other ideas for our students if they want them on the 'Enrichment Resources' tab – for example, live streamed Shakespeare plays, Massive Open Online Courses (AKA MOOCs) on anything you can think of, free access to stories in different languages and lots more. They can also find a gallery of our teachers' pets (literally!) if they look hard enough! The 'Sixth Form' tab has some additional resources based on careers, university and enrichment. Sixth Form work is found under 'Subject Resources' too.

We have an online noticeboard here <https://padlet.com/lbegbie/homelearning> that allows students/parents/carers to post pictures of their work. We'd love to see what they've been up to so please do use it. Posts won't appear instantly as they are moderated before they go public.

If you are having trouble accessing these resources for any reason, please contact school and we will endeavour to support you in accessing home learning.

School Closure - Latest

The government has updated their guidance on the temporary closure of schools to include more information on areas including social distancing, vulnerable children and working with other schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures>

Free School Meals

Please note that the following message has been put onto the Council's website:

The guidance, including new information and frequently asked questions about the National Free School Meal Voucher Scheme can be found from the DfE website via the following link. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>

Food for Vulnerable People

The Council has a Community Response Group looking at access to food for vulnerable people across the whole Borough. A dedicated response for people living in west Cheshire has been launched to support those vulnerable groups at higher risk from serious complications as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and has launched a dedicated helpline to provide advice and support, and where necessary make arrangements for food, medicines and social contact.

Telephone: 0300 123 7031

Opening hours: every day from 8am to 7pm

Email: enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Finally, officially today would have been the last day in school for my Deputy Headteacher Mr Gray before he assumes his new role as Headteacher at Calday Grammar School in West Kirby. Mr Gray has been Deputy at the school since September 2011 and has led many developments across the school that has improved the opportunities and life chances available to students. His hard work, commitment and dedication will ensure that students at his new school will undoubtedly succeed in the same way they have here.

I am pleased to remind you that from 20 April 2020 Mrs H Hill will be replacing Mr Gray as Deputy Headteacher. I wish them both well in their new roles.

Best wishes and take care.

Mr B Heeley
Headteacher