



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

05 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am briefly writing to you following the Prime Minister's announcement last evening.

I have consistently kept my own feelings to myself but, today, I feel compelled to say that the start of term has been managed chaotically by national leaders. Here at TBS, we used Monday's staff training session to prepare for a scenario that is now not happening.

I cannot tell you, on top of all of the change and uncertainty that we have already endured, how disrespected I felt on behalf of all of my colleagues last evening.

I cannot tell you how sorry I am for our students, who at last have been told that their examinations will now not take place. A decision that could and should, have been made some time ago. We have been very excited about the prospects of the current Year 11 and 13 students in their examinations this year and will continue to give our best to them.

I cannot tell you how sorry I am for our parents and carers, who have had their own and their child's lives, disrupted yet again.

However, as someone that always looks at the positives, the right decisions have at last been made, in my view. With the new strain spreading through the country, I would be concerned for the safety of my staff and also for the families who our students return home to, if we were all in school together.

Remote Learning

The school will deliver education remotely, until at least half term.

We had put into place a 9-day remote learning timetable, with the motive of it establishing a school-like routine at the start of term, ready for the (now cancelled) full return on the 18th. This type of provision is not sustainable over a longer period. We are working now to set in place a longer term provision. The minimum expectation is that our provision will:

- Give every student who engages fully, every opportunity to make broadly the same progress academically that they would have made in school
- For those students who do not engage, we know who they are and can justify what we have done to support the barriers they faced
- We will make every effort to continue supporting wider personal development, in spite of the obvious challenges to this

To facilitate our planning, there will some changes to the format in the way remote learning will be delivered, which will take place from Friday 8th January. The day will commence with Form Time as on previous days. The difference will then be that there will be no further Google Meets that day. You will receive an update on the longer term provision from Mr Fox at the end of the week.

The Buckingham School is concerned that every student should have the opportunity to attend school activities/obtain equipment, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it may be possible to subsidise those students who would otherwise be unable to attend trips/purchase items. Please feel free to write in confidence to Mrs K Bones at kbones@buckinghamschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.



Examinations

According to the announcement, A Level and GCSE examinations will not take place in the summer. What is unclear, I am sorry to say, is that no plans have been revealed as to what the process for awarding qualifications will be.

As per many previous communications, students have to remember it is the learning that is important. Exams come at the end of the course, but it is the skills and knowledge that they acquire that prepare them for the next stages. That is why we will be insisting that our examination groups engage fully with everything that we offer to them, until the end of the year.

BTEC examinations are continuing as normal, with the external examinations for January taking place. We currently have no further information beyond this.

Small School

Our provision for Small School will run consistently, as of today, for children of key workers and certain other students, who are contacted directly.

Children of key workers, given the prevalence of the new strain, should only attend school when absolutely necessary.

Please look out for the weekly booking forms.

Free School Meals

For those students eligible for free school meals, we have already made arrangements for this week. The local authority are urgently working on a plan for providing these over the coming weeks.

Technology

Our invite to contact the school to inform us of issues with the technology required for remote learning closed today, at 2pm. We have had a significant number of requests and we will work our way through these, as soon as we can.

Support

We remain, as ever, here for our students. If they have any worries or concerns, they should contact their Form Tutor. For more significant issues, we remind our community of the three key email addresses:

safeguarding@buckinghamschool.org

antibullying@buckinghamschool.org

studentfirst@buckinghamschool.org

I will never tire of saying, thank you. Thank you sincerely to this community for the love and respect that you show us. We do our best for your children, every day. I remain optimistic for the future but, for now, we will continue to stick together as a community and continue to grow stronger together.

With my very best wishes



Mr A McGinnes

Headteacher

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#wearebuckinghamschool

#proudtobebuckingham

#buckingham

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