



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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15 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As we end another week of lockdown, I am writing to update you on our current position.

This week, I am including our new "Student Remote Learning Guide – January 2021", authored by Mr Fox, supported by colleagues. Our provision incorporates the lessons learned from our experience of the last twelve months.

Examinations

Following our last communication regarding public examinations, there is a short update that we can share. We have been monitoring the situation closely. This week, the Secretary of State provided an outline for a [consultation](#). In this letter, the following information has been presented:

- Teachers will be asked to assess their students
- The final judgement on a student's grade ought to be as late as possible
- A range of evidence should inform teachers' judgements
- It is possible that grades may be informed by externally set tasks or papers
- An algorithm will not be used to set or automatically standardise anyone's grade

As this is part of a consultation, this does mean that the above could very well change. However, as we have consistently stressed, it is vital that our examination students continue at full pace with the full timetable that we are delivering to them. Those who engage fully have the opportunity to make the same progress that they would have in school and the opportunity to place themselves at an advantage against those who do not.

We have already stated our intention that students will take the planned mock examinations in March. These will be an important part of the "range of evidence". What is clear in the Secretary of State's letter, is that decisions related to awarding grades will not be made before the summer term and we will ensure that all students have the best available opportunities to achieve the grades that they have worked for.

In the meantime, we have come across a good resource, which we would like to share with you. Amongst other things to be found within the link below, are two new, free guides for parents, which contain advice on how to help your child stay on track studying for either GCSE or Sixth Form qualifications, now that examinations are not continuing (please note we are awaiting Government guidance on how grades will be awarded this summer).

You can access the guides here; please note you will be required to register:

<https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/coronavirus>

Remote Learning

We have had many compliments about the successes of our programme and we are proud to far exceed the minimum standards set out by the Government. If you are happy with what we are doing, please let us know and, if you have concerns, please do not hesitate to raise them. Please start with your child's Form Tutor or contact office@buckinghamsschool.org. In the latter case, we will forward your query to the relevant person.

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@buckinghamsschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.



Levels of engagement with the live lessons and the work we are setting are good and we thank you for your support in keeping the students on track. "RL" on Go4Schools is to highlight incomplete/unsubmitted work, whereas House Points are being awarded for good work.

We are also treating form time registration as an important opportunity to start the day well and to gauge how our students are doing. Those students who engage fully with what we offer will make broadly the same progress as they would in school and compared to their peers nationally, will earn themselves an advantage.

Share Positive News

There are so many phrases now in use daily and we've all had a smile at the bingo cards doing the rounds! Rumour has it, even our Sixth Form play phrase bingo in assemblies – I don't believe it! So whilst we "stay safe" in these "unprecedented times", remembering that "we are all in this together" and living our "new normal", let's spread some cheer on social media. In the previous lockdown, tbsstars@buckinghamschool.org became very popular and material emailed in was placed on social media for all to enjoy, by Mrs Sherwood.

There is a different feel to this lockdown and some cheer is more important than ever. Therefore, if your son or daughter has made you smile or made you proud, let us know and send us a photograph, with your child's first name, Year and House to the TBSStars email address above. We would really welcome photos of excellent written work, art work, cooking creations, DIY, reading in strange places, short video clips of singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument, exercise and just about anything else. Staff have started sending stuff in already!

School Website

The "Coronavirus Info" section on the school website has been constantly updated and you should be able to find answers to most things there. Please visit:

<https://www.buckinghamschool.org/page/?title=Coronavirus+Info&pid=299>

Major Site Improvements Continue

I am happy to tell you that the building works are progressing well. New classrooms in the Main Building are now occupied, with Modern Foreign Languages in a new, refurbished, home. The toilets in the Main Building were completed a while ago.

Meanwhile, works of the other main student toilets, in the Humanities Building, are nearing an end and the groundworks and refurbishing of the Judo Hall (into a dining room) continue. Even more, the conversion of ordinary classrooms into four new science labs is well underway and, finally, the works to dramatically reshape the changing rooms in the Queen's Building and in "The Underground" are also firmly underway.

We look forward to offering our students the clean, safe and hygienic changing and toilet facilities that we would all expect, along with a new dining room and new science labs. We continue to salute Borrás, the contractors, for the professional and considerate way that they are accommodating our needs. We will post some photos on Facebook soon, of the progress. We expect completion in April/May.

I shall never tire of saying thank you – thank you for your support of the school and making us feel respected and valued. As you've seen in the media, not every school staff member in the UK can take for granted the support of their community and we are lucky.

With my very best wishes



Mr A McGinnes

Headteacher

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#wearebuckinghamschool

#proudtobebuckingham

#buckingham

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