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Dear parent / carer,

I just wanted to write to you to give an update as to how things are progressing during this lockdown. We have had to react very quickly to rapidly changing directives over the past few weeks and we are now operating in 'lockdown-mode' as a virtual school as well as looking after approximately 15% of our pupils who are attending daily as their parents are critical workers or they are considered vulnerable. We have also completed all the necessary procedures and training to establish a mass testing centre in the school which is now operational.

Most pupils continue to work from home, accessing their learning via Google Classrooms. Teachers are online for each timetabled lesson as per the usual school timetable including daily registration for each form at 9am. Pupils are expected to complete the same amount of work as would be expected on a normal school day which includes time to understand and process what is being asked of them. They are also receiving regular 'meaningful interactions' with each of their teachers which may include live lessons, pre-recorded delivery, narrated Powerpoints, Google Meet sessions, live audio/video, ongoing feedback etc. Our plan is to provide a range of different methodologies to ensure ongoing engagement and to stick as closely as possible to our usual curriculum delivery. I am very aware of the pressure this places upon families and I thank you for your support at this time. I talk to other headteachers regularly and the fact that 98% of our pupils are engaging with our remote provision is outstanding – we are also working on the other 2%! Please continue to contact us if you require any support with home learning including access to technology – we will do all we can to help. I would also be grateful if you would continue to let us know in advance if for any reason your child is not able to attend a particular online lesson. Schools have been asked to publish a 'Remote Education: Information for Parents' document; you will find this in the 'COVID-19 Advice' section of our website for your information.

I would also like to reassure our Year 11 pupils that we are continuing to await clear guidance on how your GCSE grades will be awarded. Please try not to worry about this and just focus on your studies. We will be doing all we can to ensure that any proposed system is as robust and fair as possible so that you achieve the grades you deserve. We know you well and will be working hard on your behalf.

Finally I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have taken the time to contact us expressing your gratitude and support; once again it has been heart-warming and reassuring in these unusual times. It is not yet clear as to when exactly all pupils may be able to return – I must admit, I hear as much as you do and this is often via the media. I sincerely hope it is not too long as we are desperate to get the school back and running as normal as soon as it is safe to do so.

Please take care everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Dean Williams