



7 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing with further updates now that we have entered this more sustained period of lockdown. There are a number of things to communicate with you so I apologise if this letter is a little longer than usual.

We are all hugely disappointed that we have been forced into a new lockdown and we are very concerned about what our students and families are going through. We wish that all students were in school, as that is where they learn the best and we know that remote learning raises huge challenges for everyone. I want to assure you that we are with you in this and want to support as much as we can through the next few weeks. From a public health perspective, the lockdown is necessary; especially with the accelerating infection rate both locally and nationally. We must all make our contribution to minimising infection (especially with the new variant of the virus) until the vaccine programme can be effective, and unfortunately this means the physical closure of school to most students.

Public Examinations and PPEs

Yesterday the Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson, confirmed that GCSE examinations will not go ahead this Summer and will be replaced by Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) which are based on the professional judgements of teaching staff. We are awaiting the detailed information that we need about the process that will be used. The government has promised that Ofqual (the government body that oversees examinations and qualifications) will publish proposals for consultation next week. It is reassuring that Mr Williamson was clear that grading will not be based on a data driven algorithm (which led to so much chaos and harm last year). There is an awful lot that we do not yet know and as soon as I have relevant information I will, of course, share this with you.

What parents can be assured of is that we will put in place, across the Maiden Erlegh Trust, a very robust, objective and fair process to determine grades. We did this last summer and we were very satisfied that the outcomes of the process were fair and accurate. Once we receive clear guidance from Ofqual, I will be working with staff at the school and fellow leaders across Maiden Erlegh Trust on our approach and will share our planning with you.

It is likely that the school will need to make grading judgements on formal assessments. As a result, we have decided to postpone year 10 and 11 PPEs (scheduled for after half term) until further notice. It may be more optimal to move them to a later date to help the school inform the CAG process. We will be talking about this change with year 11 in their assembly tomorrow. We will be encouraging students due to take public examinations to continue to be absolutely focussed on the work and making progress – whatever the specifics of the CAG process is, it is clear that judgements will need to be made about the progress and attainment of students, so they must all continue to work with every effort in their lessons online and, when they return, in their classrooms.

Year 11 BTEC Health and Social Care examination

Schools have been given the option to continue to run BTEC exams. For our school, this is relevant to Year 11 Health and Social Care students. We have explored whether we would be able to ensure that we can run this examination safely and believe this is possible. Therefore, the BTEC Health and Social Care examination **will run on Friday 5 February**. Mrs Gibbs,

Deputy Headteacher, will write to the relevant parents and students with more detail about preparations and arrangements (including testing and safety measures).

We await further information about the assessment for other vocational qualifications (e.g. I-media units) and for practical elements of certain courses. We will update you further. We will also await clarity on the situation of year 10 students who were due to be taking their RS examination.

Information and Q&A sessions

Next week we will be hosting some early evening information/question and answer sessions for parents to join. This will be hosted by members of the School Leadership Team and the relevant Head of Year. If you have any questions or queries you would like to be addressed in these sessions, please complete the form [here](#).

Year 7 – Wednesday 13 January 4.30pm

[Click here to access the session.](#)

Meeting ID: 934 3456 6965 Passcode: 540506

Year 8 – Wednesday 13 January 5pm

[Click here to access the session.](#)

Meeting ID: 920 1842 6528 Passcode: 890815

Year 9 – Wednesday 13 January 5.30pm

[Click here to access the session.](#)

Meeting ID: 982 4081 6981 Passcode: 714963

Year 10 – Tuesday 12 January 5.30pm

[Click here to access the session.](#)

Meeting ID: 979 7098 2549 Passcode: 792919

Year 11 – Tuesday 12 January 4.30pm

[Click here to access the session.](#)

Meeting ID: 949 6826 4701 Passcode: 358523

COVID Risk Assessment, lateral flow testing and ongoing COVID cases

The school team have been working very hard over the last few days setting up our lateral flow testing centre, completing training and working on logistical and operation planning. As you may be aware, the original plan before lockdown was announced was to mass-test staff and students to identify any asymptomatic individuals before they are re-integrated into the school community. This phase of the mass testing programme has been delayed until the full reopening of schools. We have, however, continued with the serial testing programme. This means that we will test staff weekly and be able to test those students who are coming into school for our special provision. Our preparations have gone well and we hope to start testing a small of staff number tomorrow, with all in-school staff and special provision students being tested from Monday. We will contact parents of special provision students with further details.

Following the move into lockdown and the new responsibilities that the school has taken on relating to testing, we will be updating our school COVID response Risk Assessment. This is currently being reviewed by the Maiden Erlegh Trust board and will be published by the end of this week on the school website. The latest version of our COVID Risk Assessment can always be found [here](#).

Parents are reminded that although the school has moved to remote learning, we still need to be informed if your child has a positive COVID diagnosis. This is because we have to report to the DFE and other authorities about the prevalence of the virus in our school community. Please also be reminded that if your child is attending our special provision and shows symptoms of COVID infection they must not attend school and a test should be obtained.

Other calendar dates

The lockdown has inevitably meant that we need to revise some dates on the school calendar:

- Year 10 and 11 PPE examination have now been postponed from early February.
- Year 8 Assessment week (w/b 11 January) will no longer operate as a discrete week. Individual subjects will organise their approach to assessments and will inform students of these.
- Year 8 Think Ahead Day, scheduled for 19 January, will no longer take place (elements of the day will be rescheduled later in the year).

The following key events will continue as scheduled:

- **27 January:** Staff CPD/training day. The school will be closed to students (no online learning, no special provision);
- **11 February:** Year 7 progress meetings (parents evening). This will be delivered virtually;
- **25 February:** Year 8 progress meetings (parents evening). This will be delivered virtually;
- Progress reports (DCPs) for all year groups as currently scheduled.

In these uncertain times, good communication is essential and you have my word that we will work as hard as we can to keep you up to date with developments. If you have concerns or questions please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely



Mr A Johnson
Headteacher