

Friday 17th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coronavirus Update

I am writing to you as we approach the end of the school's Easter holidays. On Monday we will resume setting work and accepting work from our students in Years 7 -10 and Year 12.

We will not however be setting new work for students in Year 11 and Year 13. We are considering the end of the spring term, Friday 3rd April, as the end of the course of study for students in Year 11 and Year 13 apart from our BTEC students who are still completing units.

Given the Ofqual announcements firstly regarding GCSE and A level and in the last few days, regarding Vocational Qualifications and Technical Awards, it is clear we do not need any new work from students in Year 11 and Year 13. We will be now moving to the point of starting the process of accrediting our students with our professionally assigned grades using all our assessments (tests, PPEs, NEAs, modules completed, classwork, homework etc) and our professional knowledge about our students. We will be using the work and assessments they have done from September 2018 through to the end of Friday 3rd April as this was our last working day with them and the point at which we stopped setting and accepting work for them. We have the evidence of their work and assessments over the course of five terms.

We will be using this evidence and crucially our professional judgement as to what grade we believe each student *would have* achieved if learning had not been disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic. There may well be work however that some students were close to completing, but had not quite finished when we ended the spring term on 3rd April and would like it to be considered given the time and effort they have given it thus far. I invite those students concerned to finish and submit any outstanding work by Wednesday 22nd April. Students in Year 11 and Year 13 will **not** be set any new work as previously mentioned and so this invitation is out of respect for a student who was close to finishing some work and would like it to be considered as evidence.

Some subjects have practical tasks that form coursework such as art, photography and design technology. Students are invited, if they so wish, to send in pictures of their best samples and have the online exchange with their teachers, but under the current government strategy of lockdown they must not come to school and bring in physical evidence of their work. Teachers will use the evidence they have about their students' work, knowledge and skills over the period of five terms of work and as well as their professional judgement. Once the lockdown is lifted students can bring in the physical evidence of their practical work and receive the feedback they richly deserve on their work.

Our students in Year 11 and Year 13 should be reassured by the fact that our teachers are very experienced in assigning their professional predictions for students as this is a practice we have undertaken for many years. Over many years our teachers have been able to predict the grades that students subsequently go on to achieve in the summer.

The difference this year is that we must also rank order the students who have the same professional prediction grade for a subject and course.

For some subjects there will be many students across different classes who are assigned the same professional prediction grade that must then be placed in rank order. We will endeavour to ensure that this accreditation process is as robust and as fair as possible. This will be a significant piece of work for teaching staff and subject leaders and I am extremely grateful for it. We will undertake a strong moderation (checking) procedure to complete the process and be at the point where we can submit our grades with confidence. This entire process will take quite some time to ensure that we do right by all our students.

We aim to start the process on Monday 27th April, but I must repeat a point made in a previous letter that this is not a process that students or their families can participate in. We are required to submit our professional prediction grade of what we believe a student would have achieved in the summer, but this is not a matter for negotiation with a student or a well-meaning family member. Once the process is complete and we submit our grades and rank orders to the examination boards we cannot and will not share the outcomes with our students or their families. Ofqual have stated that they will undertake their own moderation process and that some grades awarded by schools and colleges may move up or down as a result of the moderation. They have recently announced that the final grades will be awarded to Year 13 students on 13th August and to Year 11 students on 20th August which were the originally published dates.

Our students in Year 10 and Year 12 may be feeling anxious about the disruption to their courses and understandably so. All being well they will be taking their examinations next year, but in the knowledge that they have been out of school for a significant part of their courses. I offer two points of reassurance, firstly (and perhaps obviously) this applies to all students in the country, and secondly our students' efforts combined with the dedication and commitment of our staff will ensure that our students are not at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers across the country, in fact quite the opposite will be the case.

On a completely different matter, congratulations are well and truly due to Mr Ashley, the PE team and all members (past and present) of our school community who have taken part in the fund raising campaign for the NHS by completing a 5km run and donating to the just giving page.

Please go to our latest news section of our website or look it up on twitter: #RUN5K4NHS.

A fantastic achievement and a shining example of the strength of our Oriel community. Well done and thank you to all who have supported such a worthy cause.

These are unprecedented times for us all, but a reminder (if any were needed) of the importance of health and well-being. We shall get through these times and I am confident that in years to come we will be able to look back with a sense of pride for the support that we provided to others.

On behalf of our staff and governors I should like to express my gratitude to you for your continued and understanding and support at this time. I hope that you and your family stay safe and well.

With my very best wishes

Philip Stack
Headteacher