

Haggerston School

Aspiration, Creativity, Character

Headteacher's Newsletter - 5th Jan 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Although I did say in my previous contacts that we couldn't be sure that things wouldn't change, those words turned out to be more pertinent than I had expected. Obviously, the Prime Minister's announcement last night came as a disappointment to us all, if perhaps not a total surprise, but on the plus side, we were already preparing for a period of remote learning so most of the information we have already sent to you remains relevant.

Remote Learning:

By now, I hope that students are ready to access remote learning via the DPR and Google Meet. Although this is by no means our ideal method of teaching, I hope that all parents and students will see that this is an improved offer compared to what we were able to provide during the first lockdown last year. If you have any questions about remote learning, please do contact us at the school as quickly as possible so we can resolve issues promptly. Teachers will be delivering students' usual timetables in most subjects and students should make sure they are regularly checking for updates. I would add that work will be set for every lesson, but it may not always be the case that all lessons are delivered 'live', as teachers may set work for students to complete independently in the lesson time in a different format. This may be the case, for example, if a teacher is sick and work is set by the head of department on their behalf. If that is the case, this will be clear via the DPR. I would also ask parents to be considerate of the fact that many teachers are also now having to look after very small children at home themselves, or that they or members of their families may be unwell, as cases of the new strain of COVID-19 continue to rise. I'm sure we will all try to show as much understanding as we can for each other during this difficult time and appreciate that everyone is doing their very best.

Free School Meals:

For students who are eligible for free school meals, we will continue to offer hampers for collection on a fortnightly basis. You will be contacted by the school but if you have any questions or queries, please contact Mr Avramidis (ilias.avramidis@haggerston.hackney.sch.uk) who should be able to support you.

Pastoral Concerns and Safeguarding:

If there are any pastoral or safeguarding concerns for you or your child over the coming period, please do contact us at the school. Your child's Head of Year is the best person to contact initially but if you have more serious safeguarding concerns then Mrs Moran and the safeguarding team (safeguarding@haggerston.hackney.sch.uk) will be best placed to support.

Mass Testing for Covid 19

Obviously this is now on hold for the vast majority of students, although we will be working towards offering testing to the eligible students attending school to ensure that they and the staff on site remain as safe as possible. It would still be helpful if you could complete the consent form that was sent out to you yesterday so we are ready to go when students return.

Examination Arrangements - Years 11 & 13:

We have already been in contact with students in Year 11 and 13 separately, but I would ask parents and students to bear with us as we await more information from the government on the process by which they will be awarded grades in the summer. The most important thing is that students don't worry and continue to focus on their studies. The message was not that exams are cancelled completely, but that they would not be going ahead in their normal form. Looking at the alternative arrangements which have been put in place in Scotland and Wales, it looks likely that some kind of controlled assessment is likely to be a key part of their eventual final grade. Students should not contact teachers asking them to change current or predicted grades. Apart from being unethical, this is unlikely to be the way assessment will work again this year, especially in view of the criticism which followed last year's grade allocation. All the learning students will do over the coming weeks and months will be critical, not only towards this year's grades but also as a basis for their next steps, whether those lead to the Sixth Form, college, university or work. Now is not the time for students to feel despondent and for their motivation to drop as there is still a long journey ahead to their final assessments, whatever those look like. Please reassure your child that we will support them in every way possible to ensure that they are in a strong position to achieve the results they deserve and are able to progress to the next stage of their education.

Parent's Evening:

These will continue as per the calendar, in virtual formats. The first parent's evening of the year is next week and information will be shared shortly about how to access the online meetings with teachers.

In the meantime, thank you all again for the support you continue to show us as a school and for the many kind words and considerate gestures we have received. These are challenging times for all of us, but I know we are a strong school community and that will sustain us over this next period of lockdown, hopefully the last! Please do not hesitate to contact us at the school if you need to. We will keep you updated of any new developments via our weekly parent newsletter and social media – or direct contact where that is required. All that remains, is for me to send my best wishes to the whole Haggerston community to stay safe and healthy.

Kind regards



Ciara Emmerson

Headteacher