

The Priory School

West Bank, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3DG
A Voluntary Aided Church of England School

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Headteacher: R Gibb BMus, MEd



26th March 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I wanted to write specifically to parents and carers of Y10 as I am sure this is an anxious time for you and your children regarding their GCSE and BTEC courses.

My colleagues have been providing lessons with appropriate content for this time of year, and will continue to do so for as long as is necessary. We have had a surprisingly high number of emails from parents whose children are telling them they cannot log onto school systems, but I wanted to reassure you that we are able to monitor this via Show My Home Work and school email accounts, and have found that this is not always the case. So, from our point of view, all students can access what they need, and where staff have noticed a lack of engagement from any student in their class, they are making contact directly with the student and, if needed the parent or carer to ensure we make contact. However, I am really pleased to report that, overall, engagement by Y10 students has been the highest in the school so far.

One piece of feedback that I have had from teachers is that not all students are working according to their timetable. We would very much appreciate it if you could monitor this; students should work through their lessons as if each day was a school day, sticking to the subjects they would normally have on that day. They do not necessarily need to stick to school timings and can adjust the order of lessons for any one day, but they should not pick and mix lessons from different days please. This makes it much harder for staff to monitor their work, and there is every chance that students are selecting their favourite subjects and neglecting the ones they find more challenging or less engaging. Your support with this would be greatly appreciated.

Your son or daughter will also continue to receive pastoral support and communication from Mr Overall, Head of Year 10, and from their form tutor too. Mr Overall will be making contact on assembly days in order to try to keep a routine going. School email accounts will be used for this. We will also send out a student bulletin at the end of each week, and a school newsletter will come every two weeks, with the next one due on Friday 3 April.

Our concern, like yours, is the impact longer term for this year group on missing out on their education. Obviously, one of the biggest challenges is that we do not know how long the situation will continue for. I can only reassure you that the quality of lessons staff are posting is very good, even though we know this is not an entirely satisfactory substitution for working with a teacher in a classroom. However, all teaching staff are available by email if your son or daughter needs additional support or clarification. The most important thing is that students keep up to date with their lessons, do the work set to the best of their ability and ask for help if they need it. On returning to school we will be assessing how we pick up our students' learning to ensure as far as possible that your son or daughter will not be disadvantaged in any way because of the current circumstances.

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In the light of the changes we are having to work with the Year 10 mocks have been postponed. Once we are all back at school and normal working is resumed we will consider how best to carry out a mock series for our Year 10 students. It is likely to be an even more important process once we return to school as teachers assess the student progress that has occurred during this period of remote learning. We would continue to reinforce the independent use of GCSE Pod by Year 10 for all their subjects. This is an excellent tool to reinforce all learning occurring via the remote learning that is currently being set by class teachers.

We have received unprecedented amounts of thanks and praise from parents and carers for our wonderful staff this past week, and I can only reiterate this myself. I have been overwhelmed and humbled by the willingness of all our staff to support our students in the very best way possible under the current circumstances. I cannot make any promises about the length of this temporary school closure, but I have absolute faith in the ability and commitment of my colleagues to do the very best they can to continue to educate your children. Thank you to everyone for playing their own part in this; we need to work together more than ever before, and I am truly grateful for your support and endeavours at home.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gibb
Headteacher