

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are now a week in to the new term. It has been great to see all the work that students are doing while at home.

Academy News

At the Academy we are continuing to work to support our students in and out of school along with our families and our community as much as we possibly can. You might already be aware that as well as donating all our goggles from science and technology we are using resources and the ingenuity of staff in school to provide PPE – visors and scrubs for NHS and Care workers. So far we have donated over two hundred pairs of goggles, manufactured and delivered over 200 PPE visors (we have enough material to make 700) and 30 sets of scrubs. We really appreciate all the positive feedback from you about these projects. More information is available on our twitter and facebook pages.

Home Learning

Staff in all teams are continuing to produce resources for our students. An updated document will be with you soon detailing everything that is available on the school website and new work is constantly being uploaded –this includes support for Y11 as they prepare for life post-16. We have also added documents to the Keeping Motivated section of the website under the Home Learning tab. Don't forget there are lots of ideas for well-being as well which is so vital in these difficult times. Attached to this email is information on:

- Top tips for home learning for parents
- An updated list of resources available for BBC bitesize

Thank you for the overwhelming support around the materials we are providing for home learning. Please keep the photos coming. We are now issuing regular reward postcards as well as Headteacher's awards. It doesn't have to be just for academic work either. We know that our students are involved in all sorts of creative projects.

As far as you are able, encourage your children to follow as near to their normal timetable as possible. This not always possible. We appreciate that it is difficult to support your children while you are also working from home yourselves and while trying to protect your children's wellbeing and mental health. The most important thing is that children are encouraged to do what they can.

Information is on the website for when teachers will be responding to emails for each year group for each subject. They will be available to help your child understand the work, check any work your child has completed and wishes to submit and for general keeping in touch too. Hegarty maths and Tassomai science will provide your child with instant feedback but the teachers are still available to answer questions and to explain tricky concepts.

Safeguarding

In the current climate teenagers are using social media to keep in touch more than ever. This is obviously a great way of keeping connected to the outside world and needs to be encouraged. However, this can sometimes pose a risk to them if they do not follow precautions. ZOOM and HOUSEPARTY are two of the most popular apps currently in use. Attached to this email you will also find:

- An academy safeguarding update
- A safety guide for parents on the app ZOOM
- A safety guide for parents on the app HOUSEPARTY

Free School Meals

The government's Free School Meals voucher scheme is up and running but currently experiencing a significant backlog. We are working hard with the EDENRED on the issues. Although the administration of this lies with them, please contact us if you are experiencing difficulty or hardship whilst waiting for vouchers to arrive. We will help as much as we can. If your financial situation has changed and you think your child may now be entitled to free school meals, applications will need to be made via Howden House. Further details application process can be found on our website on our website

<https://www.birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk/images/Files/free-school-meals-updated.pdf>

Trips

As you know, unfortunately we had to cancel a number of residential trips. We are currently working with insurers around refunds. As soon as we have any information we will let you know.

Media

There has been a lot of speculation in some areas of the media recently about when schools will reopen. I would like to take the opportunity to confirm that schools have not been informed of any decisions. The only knowledge we have for certain about this is what is reported in the daily briefings from Downing Street. Likewise, the government announced that laptops will be made available for schools to distribute to students where needed. We have had no details of that as yet. As soon as we do, we will be in touch.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our families for your hard work, the overwhelming support and commitment. Every single member of staff at the academy is incredible proud of the resilience and resourcefulness our students are showing. Please keep the photos coming and update us on all the wonderful work that is going on. Our facebook and twitter details are available in the safeguarding update attached to this email.

Stay safe and take care.

Sincerely,

Gina Newton