

4 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

There has been lots of great work going on at Birley despite the difficult times. I am proud of how our students have risen to every challenge, dug deep into their reserves of resilience and resourcefulness supported, as always, by the staff. Our recovery curriculum continues to deliver excellent lessons ensuring that we close the knowledge gaps left by so much time out of school. Thank you for all the positive feedback on our remote curriculum too. It delivers some first-rate resources. Remember that the remote curriculum can be accessed by all students so it is a great resource for pre-learning, over-learning and revision. I'm sure that you will also find it interesting to see what your child has been studying for every subject.

In addition we have been fundraising for charity- our Christmas snowflake is yet again on the Children's hospital- switch on is tonight.



We have also celebrated students' achievements and attendance with rewards and certificates.

Accessing the remote curriculum is easy:

- If your child has access to suitable IT (WiFi, laptops, tablets, smartphones) they should use Microsoft Sharepoint. This is because we have;
 - recorded teacher explanations to support their learning
 - Clear instructions as to what tasks need completing
 - All the resources they need
- This is the link: <https://leadacademytrust.sharepoint.com/sites/BirleySecondaryAcademy>
- Students need to log on with their email address and usual password.
- Once on the Student Sharepoint, your child will be able to access the resources for all of their subjects, for the appropriate week.
- Alternatively, the same online learning can also be accessed by visiting the school website <https://www.birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk/> and clicking on the 'Home Learning' tab





The Birley Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy

Headteacher: Gina Newton

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If their password needs resetting, please contact Mrs Gillham at leoniegillham@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk. Please be aware that this may take up to 24 hours and will need to be submitted before half term.

If your child does not have access to suitable IT, we will provide paper resources which can be collected from reception. Please let us know if that is the case. We also have a limited number of laptops that we can loan to students who are isolating.

Self –isolation

If your child displays any symptoms of Covid then they must take a test and self-isolate. They should not come into school until they have a negative test or until their isolation period is complete. If they have been in contact with anyone displaying symptoms then they should self-isolate for 14 days or until that person has a negative test. Could I please remind you that if your child is sent home to self-isolate then they must not have contact with anyone outside their household- this includes other self-isolating students. Children displaying symptoms or awaiting test results should not be sent into school. Anyone sent home from school with symptoms will need to produce a negative test before they are allowed back in. To act in any other way puts all students, staff and families at risk. Sheffield is in a Tier 3 and community transmission in the Birley Area is particularly high. Public Health England have been very clear that it's the community transmission coming into school that is causing the cases we have. Self-isolation is a legal requirement and breaking it can attract fines of up to £10,000. But more importantly, self- isolation is essential to keeping the community safe, protecting the NHS and ensuring that our children can stay in school where they belong, catching up on their missed learning.

Examinations

Following the disruptions to the past school year there has been a lot of uncertainty around the GCSE examinations for 2021. Our Y11 have been really wonderful managing the uncertainty and have impressed all staff with their maturity and determination to concentrate on their learning. It must be so unsettling for them to not have known if the exams would even go ahead, or how their grades would be arrived at.

Although we do not still have full details of the Government's plans, yesterday the DfE published information confirming that GCSEs will go ahead in England. More information can be obtained here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-measures-to-support-students-ahead-of-next-summer-exams>

The DfE have confirmed that to make up for the disruption had over the past 9 months and the future disruption to come they will put in additional measures. These now include:

- An extra three weeks of teaching time
- More generous grading than usual, in line with last summer's outcomes, so students this year are not disadvantaged;
- Students will receive advance notice of some topic areas to help focus revision;



Registered no. 08296921



- Exam aids, e.g. formula sheets - will be provided in some exams, reducing the amount of information students need to memorise.

Contingency plans:

- If students miss one or more exams due to self-isolation or sickness but have still completed a proportion of their qualification they will still receive a grade;
- If a student misses all their assessments in a subject, they will have the opportunity to sit a contingency paper held shortly after the main exams;
- In the extreme case where a student has a legitimate reason to miss all their papers, then a validated teacher informed assessment can be used, only once all chances to sit an exam have passed.

There will be more detail on exam adaptations published in the New Year. In the meantime we will continue to prepare and reassure our Y11.

Lunches

Thank you for your support and understanding around the suspension of school lunches. I am delighted to say that from next week lunches will again be available to all students. The menu will be restricted for the moment to sandwiches, pizza, cookies, fruit and drinks.

Uniform

Just a reminder that as part of our adaptations students are able to wear a plain navy blue V neck jumper to school under their blazer. They are also allowed to wear black, white or navy skins or a polo neck jumper under their shirt even if it is slightly visible. These must be in addition to the blazer rather than instead of it. The blazer must be worn at all times.

Hoodies and non-uniform jumpers are not allowed and will continue to be confiscated for repeat offences. A recent monitoring visit from our School Partner commented on the excellent standard of uniform in the academy. Thank you to everyone who supports us with this.

Last day arrangements

The Academy breaks up for the Christmas holiday on Friday 18, December. That day will be a fundraising one for our chosen charities and students will be allowed to wear Christmas themed dress. Please do not feel that you have to go out and buy anything for this, a piece of (flame resistant) tinsel would even be enough. We just want to get into the Christmas spirit. More information about this will be sent out next week.

Students will start at the normal time but we will be doing a traditional finish. In line with our current arrangements the finish will be staggered. Again the details of finish times will be coming out to you next week.

Safeguarding





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A reminder that the DSL for the school is Mr Jones, Deputy Headteacher who can be contacted at: MarkJones@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk and Miss Abbott is the safeguarding officer: JessicaAbbott@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk .

If you have any safeguarding concerns about your child or any other child in the academy then please contact them. If your child has any worries or concerns then they should talk to their Year Leader, Form Tutor or any member of staff that they feel comfortable with. Out of hours, or in the school holidays the number for the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub is **0114 273 4855**

Support

Please remember that we appreciate that these are challenging and uncertain times. If there is any way that we can help, or if your child would like someone to talk to, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Your support and positive messages have meant so much to all staff here. Thank you so much for them. Please take care.

Yours faithfully

Gina Newton
Headteacher

