



Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School

Educating Women of the Future

20th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope my letter finds you and your families well. We are starting the summer term today and also starting the third week of school closure. I would like to thank you all for the support you have shown the school. A special thank you for your added home role as hands on motivator for daily school work, quite different from the usual parenting role of keeping a watchful eye on evening, weekend and sometimes holiday homework and revision of learning.

We are expecting the school's provision to continue to be via online learning for the coming weeks. I know that everyone, just like all our staff, will be keenly watching, reading and listening to news for information about when children can return to school. For schools there is a particular problem with the expectations regarding social distancing and you will be aware that our five buildings are closely configured and less than generously developed. I would expect that until social distancing measures become sufficiently different, children will be deemed safer at home and schools will remain closed for the majority as they are now. Of course as soon as the government releases information to me about the process of returning to school, I will share it with our families.

We are extremely fortunate to have Google Classroom provision for all our students. Not all schools nationally are able to provide such a learning platform or anything like it which is why new initiatives will be announced today for ways teachers and young people can access some prepared lessons going forward. These are generic lessons and may not be appropriate to a school's curriculum or individual needs. I do recognise that there are many excellent learning platforms that students may wish to dip into for interest or wider information and we have already recommended these. Staff will continue to research others and guide students accordingly. Best practice safeguarding principles mean that we will not be changing to use of video lessons. Audio content has always been available to staff where they feel it to be appropriate and valuable to planned learning. When I met with each year group before they left school in March I did reinforce the need for students to maintain a dialogue with their teachers through their Google Classrooms whether they required clarity or had any comments to make regarding their work, just as they might share in their school classrooms. I appreciate students may be over reliant on families to answer their learning queries. Please remind them to talk to their teachers.

Google Classroom has enabled PHSE classrooms for every year group and also Form Tutor/Form Head of Year communication and interaction with students. It is important for students to use these facilities, wherever possible during the course of the normal school day hours; structure and routine going forward will have a positive benefit for all. Wellbeing is being prioritised through communication exchanges and activities available in these virtual classrooms. Again we are fortunate that as part of Oxford University's Mindfulness research programme, the school has been given access to many helpful online platforms for preserving wellbeing and these are

shared in the Google classrooms. I would also like to share with you a number of resources created by the NSPCC to support Parents and Carers during this pandemic. Topics include

- *Talking to a child worried about coronavirus*
- *Parents working from home*
- *Children staying home alone*
- *Lockdown and separated parents*
- *How to cope with tantrums and other difficult behaviour*

The advice can be found on the NSPCC website here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

Public examinations are a usual feature of the summer term. The government has been quite clear on how schools should assess expected student outcomes for those currently in Years 11 and 13 so that results can be published on the days that had been already planned for the announcements. Together with the relevant staff teams, I have been communicating with families and students of Years 11 and 13 to keep them informed of details and to assure them that the award of grades process will be professional, have integrity and that it will be informed by our palette of data, according to Ofqual and government expectations.

I am pleased to share with you some of the staff initiatives to offer support to the NHS and general public in this challenging time. Mr Petrie, Head of Design and Technology, has started producing face masks in school for GP practices, hospitals and pharmacists. Happily many schools are able to contribute in this way. Mrs Doel, Head of Year 8, is part of a recently set up home industry to make hospital scrubs and Ms Hewson is part of Comfort Crafts - Hearts for Hospitals. I am sure that many of you, our students and your families, will be involved with your communities and friends in similar ways. The school would be pleased to hear about it. There is opportunity for everyone to document the social history of this pandemic by recording their current experiences in a journal. The process of writing the journals and then reading those of others will be helpful to everyone's learning, understanding and wellbeing when we are all at liberty to socialise freely once again.

Stay safe. All good wishes and best regards,



Violet Walker
Headteacher