

Dear Parents and Carers

This is, I promise, the final email at the end of a long and eventful week. I just want to update everybody on where we are up to.

Most memorably, Year 11 students completed what will, in all probability, be their final day at the Academy. Although we had less than two days' notice, I am glad to say we did them proud. We told stories; we saw embarrassing photographs of their much younger selves; we sang; we presented awards to the most dramatic, the hardest working and the one most likely to be Prime Minister (and many others); we watched Mrs Williams and Mr Packwood by special video recording; we laughed and one or two of us shed a tear. They have been a very special year group and they leave us, albeit sooner than we expected, full of confidence for what they will achieve.

Our departing students will be pleased to know that there was also an announcement on the process by which exam grades will be awarded. The process is outlined at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>

Although the detail is still lacking, the sequence of events seems to be as follows. Schools will estimate the grades that students would have achieved. Ofqual will then use these estimates and data on students' prior attainment to "calculate" results. These results will be published in July. If students are not happy with the grade they are awarded, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam once the system is operating normally, presumably in the Autumn. We will need to look carefully at the details of these arrangements when they are published. It will be important to make sure that students' who have made a great deal of progress are not penalised because of their prior attainment in test scores at the age of 11. I will, of course, update you on how this process is operating.

It looks as though we will be hosting 50-60 students on Monday morning. I have written separately to the parents of these students with details of the arrangements for the day. Most of our students will be working at home. As far as we are aware, every student who was here today left with a "starter pack" of work to supplement the tasks and activities on Show My Homework. We have packs available for students who were absent today. These can be collected from the Academy office on Monday. Where this is not possible (for example if your whole family is self-isolating), please let us know and we will put a pack in the post. Distance learning on this scale is a new venture for us and we will be learning as we go along, both from our own experience and from that of other schools. It is also a new experience for students and families. Early next week, we will establish a new section of our website to provide support for families working at home. By Easter, we also hope to be able to let you know about the systems we will be using to allow students to submit work and receive feedback. Mr Reed is the mastermind behind this work. If you have any questions on the distance learning process, please email him on [paul.reed@macclesfieldacademy.org](mailto:paul.reed@macclesfieldacademy.org).

Several parents have asked about Free School Meals. We are setting up an arrangement with a national specialist provider to provide supermarket vouchers to all families who normally receive these meals. Understandably the providers of this service are very much in demand at the moment, but we hope to have a system fully operational by the middle of next week.

I want to say a huge thank you to everybody who has contributed to our foodbank collection. The generosity of families at such a difficult time is truly humbling; we have a van load rather than the expected car load of food to take in to the food bank on Tuesday. If you would like to add a contribution on Monday, please drop it off at reception. We have also been asked about the

possibility of making cash donations to the food bank. We will set up a facility for this on the school gateway early next week.

On a personal note, I have been hugely touched by the stream of messages of support and encouragement I have received in response to these emails. I will continue to keep in touch at least once a week until the situation returns to normal, but trust that I will not need to bombard you with quite as many communications as I have over the last few days. This is uncharted territory for families and schools alike and we are all feeling our way through it. We will make some mistakes I am sure, but please rest assured that we will spare no effort to make the best provision for you children that we possibly can over the coming weeks and months.

Most of all, I wish you all the good health and fortitude to overcome the challenges that lie ahead for us all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Hedge', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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