

Friday April 3rd

Dear Parents and Carers

I had delayed this week's first email until today, because we had understood that the detailed arrangements for the awarding of exam grades would be announced this afternoon. However, that announcement has now been postponed until either tomorrow or Friday. Once we have it I will write again to discuss any implications. In the meantime, could I please ask that parents and students do not contact subject teachers about the grade they might be awarded. Please rest assured that Academy staff will undertake the process of recommending grades with complete integrity and will consider all aspects of students' performance and likely progress before their final exams would have been taken. The integrity of this operation is in danger of being compromised (or at least being seen to be compromised) if teachers are at the receiving end of "lobbying".

In the absence of news on exam grading I would like to reflect on the forthcoming Easter "holidays". There is no expectation that students will be completing school work in the holidays, although if they want to get ahead there is no reason why they should not do so. However, there are three very important things that everybody can do, not only to make the Easter break more enjoyable but also to prepare for the likelihood of several weeks of further school closure as we move into May (and possibly beyond).

Firstly, keep on reading. There is a page in the homeworking section of our website that is especially devoted to reading. It can be found at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/keep-on-reading/>. This page provides reading lists for each year group, links to access the books free online through either Project Gutenberg or Audible and ideas for continuing to link with the Academy library. It also refers to the online literacy programmes we use in the Academy: Reading Eggs (primarily- but not only- for students in Year 7) and IDL (primarily- but not only- for older students with dyslexic tendencies). Students who are already enrolled on these programmes can continue to use them from home using the same log in details as they would in school. If you think your son or daughter might benefit from beginning to use one of these programmes during our enforced closure, please let me know.

Secondly, use the Internet safely. As most students are working from home they will undoubtedly be spending more time online completing work set by their teachers and using technology for gaming, socialising and communication. In particular, they will, quite understandably, want to use social media to contact and support their friends. I want to encourage this. We all have an important part to play in supporting one another's wellbeing and our students are no exception. However, this increase use of the Internet puts a premium on students applying everything they have been taught about e-safety. It is especially important that they do not give any personal information online to anybody they do not know in real life. The government has just published new information for parents on this very point. It can be found in Section 6.3 of their new information document at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>.

There is also further advice on the e-safety page of our website homeworking section at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/e-safety/>.

Thirdly, keep fit. Students (and adults too for that matter!) should make sure that they are making full use of their daily exercise allowance (although it is important that they do not use it to meet up with people from outside their household). There is also a vast range of workouts available online including (but not limited to) the daily 30 minute session with Joe Wickes “the nations PE teacher” which is streamed every morning at 9.00 on <https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1> where all the past programmes can be found. It has been good to see lots of students keeping active by trying the PE challenges on our PE Instagram account (maccacademype). There is still plenty of time to try this week’s challenge and create an Olympic sporting event at home.

Finally I would like to thank all of you who have replied to these emails with messages of encouragement, gratitude or, sometimes, amusement. As today is 1st April, I would like to end with a story sent in by a parent earlier this morning which really did brighten my day: ***This morning we woke our children up and told them you had emailed saying from now on they have to wear full school uniform and email a photo to their form tutors to prove they were doing it. They were very annoyed when they realised what date it was! I fear we are going to get a morning of hastily thought out reprisals!***

I hope you are all staying safe at this very difficult time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything more we can do to support you as we work together to support your children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Hedge', with a large, stylized initial 'RH' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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