

19th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you all remain in good health and that in some way or another you have managed to enjoy some of the sunshine.

Since Easter (only a week away but somehow it feels like longer) there has been a series of announcements which will make a significant difference to the way we operate at the start of the new term:

- As you will be aware, the lockdown period has been extended for at least a further three weeks. There are many rumours flying around about when schools will eventually re-open. However, I think we are all best advised not to try and second guess when this will be but, instead, to focus on doing what we are doing day by day as well as we can possibly do it. For Academy staff, this means doing the very best we can to support all of our students and their families; for the great majority of our students this means making the best possible use of the learning opportunities we are able to provide. I completely understand that this is not the same as being at school and that our young people will miss the direct human contact with staff and, especially, with their friends. We miss them too, but at the moment it is really important that we continue to observe the lockdown and **stay at home to save lives and protect the NHS.**
- Ofqual have announced that they are now proposing that students in Year 9 and Year 10 **should** be awarded grades this summer. However this proposal is subject to a consultation ending on 29th April. If you have not responded to this consultation, please see my last email for details. Please note that students are able to respond separately from parents. The more responses the better! The Ofqual guidance also makes it clear that there is no need for students to produce any more work in the subjects in which they were due to take exams. If you have any questions about the grading process, please contact me. Please remember that **it is essential that you do not contact subject teachers or subject leaders about the recommended grades.**
- Ofqual have also announced that students taking technical awards will be awarded grades by following the same broad principles as those taking GCSEs. Although we are awaiting the fine details of how this will work from the different awarding bodies, this means we can start the process of grading and ranking all of our students in every subject they have taken. Please understand that this will be a big job and might mean that teachers do not respond to any enquiries as quickly as they normally would. If you have any questions about this specific aspect of the grading process, please contact me. Please remember that you must not contact subject teachers or subject leaders about the recommended grades.
- Only today (19th April) the Secretary of State announced that he would introduce a scheme to lend laptops and internet routers to disadvantaged students in Year 10. This is potentially a big step forward which could enable us to reallocate equipment that we have lent out to students in other year groups. However, experience has taught us that there is sometimes a time lag between a high profile announcement and the detailed implementation of the detail. We will track what is happening with this on a daily basis and let eligible families know as soon as we have any more news.
- At the same time, the Secretary of State also announced the establishment of the Oak Academy- an online service that will be providing lessons while students are at home. Again we are awaiting the details but as soon as we have them we will include relevant lessons in the information we put on Show My Homework. The BBC are also starting to run special programmes designed to support learning and, again we will include these where necessary.

Taken together, these announcements mean the current position (and the best advice going forward) for students in each year group is as set out below:

Year 7	Continue with your own version of the programme of English and Maths, supplemented by one or two other subjects or activities each day that was set out in the schedule I sent you before Easter. Make sure you are doing some reading every day.
Year 8	For the time being, continue with your own version of the programme of English and Maths, supplemented by one or two other subjects or activities each day that was set out in the schedule I sent you before Easter. Make sure you are doing some reading every day. However work is going on behind the scenes to complete the pathways process and allocate you to your pathway subjects for next year. Once this is complete, those of you on the EBacc pathway will be able to begin working for four new subjects and get a head start on these qualifications ahead of our return to school. Those of you on the preparation pathway will be continue with the wider range of subjects you are taking at the moment.
Year 9	Continue with English, Maths, Science and your Foreign Language (if you are taking one). Make sure you are doing some reading every day. Work is going on behind the scenes to complete the pathways process and allocate you to your pathway subjects for next year. Once this is complete, you will be able to begin working for four new subjects and get a head start on these qualifications ahead of our return to school.
Year 10	Continue with English, Maths, Science and work for Events Management or ASDAN (if you are taking one of these programmes). Make sure you are doing some reading every day. Work is going on behind the scenes to complete the pathways process and allocate you to your pathway subjects for next year. Once this is complete, you will be able to begin working for four new subjects and get a head start on these qualifications ahead of our return to school.
Year 11	Make sure you are doing some reading every day. There is no need for you for you to do any further work for the GCSEs you were due to take this summer. However, whatever you do next year, you will need to retake maths and

	<p>English if you do not gain a Grade 4 pass. The best advice we can give at this stage, therefore is to continue with Maths and/or English unless you are certain that you will gain at least a Grade 5 in these subjects. Once the grading process is complete (we expect this to be the end of May) we will start working with the different post 16 providers to support you in moving on to your intended courses for next year. So that we can target the right support to the right student, we will send out a survey to you all later this week to confirm your current plans for next year. Please complete and return this as soon as you can.</p>
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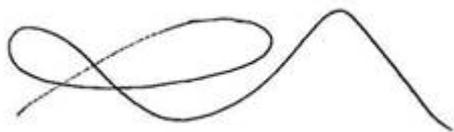
Since we began the whole process of online learning, we have had a number of questions from parents asking about the best way to support students while they are working at home. I have tried to answer some of these questions individually, or, where they seemed to be raising common question in these emails to all of our parents. We have also included suggestions and materials on the homeworking section of our website. Over the Easter “break”, we have come up with a new idea and, over the next couple of weeks, Miss Halsall will work with some of the students in school to make a (socially distanced) video providing answers to the questions that parents and students have about working at home. So if you, or your son, or your daughter has a question about what they should be doing, or how they should be doing it or any other aspect of the current unusual arrangements please email her at laura.halsall@macclesfieldacademy.org and she will include them (anonymously) in the video.

I hope this summary of the position we have reached at the start of the new term is helpful. I shall include further information later in the week but I thought this was enough to be going on with. I do, however, want to say one further thing. I massively appreciate the huge efforts that parents are making to support learning during the lockdown; I also understand that this support is sometimes made more difficult by the additional pressures that families are facing. Finances may be more stretched; family relationships may be under greater strain; every day anxieties may become magnified and more intense. I hope you know that if you are concerned about any of these things (or anything else) you can talk to a member of our Academy staff and we will do whatever we can to point you in the direction on support. However, if you would prefer a more independent ear, please remember that Tony Togneri, minister of St George’s St Baptist Church has made himself available to support any parent who needs help at this difficult time. Tony can be contacted on 07595 728739 or tonytogneri@talktalk.net . Tony is a huge source of strength to the whole Academy community and we are very grateful for his continued work with us.

Now that the “term” is underway, I will resume the pattern of keeping you up to date with a couple of emails a week. In the meantime, if there is anything at all you need to know, please do not hesitate to email me on head@macclesfieldacademy.org.

Take care and stay safe

With every best wish

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a final upward stroke.

Richard Hedge

Headteacher

The Macclesfield Academy

PA: Lara Nolan

lara.nolan@macclesfieldacademy.org

Tel: 01625 383113