

April 25th 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this email finds you and your families well. As the lockdown continues we are all having to dig deep to sustain the start we have made with in school provision and home learning. It is a tough job for teachers but, I suspect, an even tougher job for parents so I want to use this email to share some of the things we are trying to do to support this process.

First, I want to introduce a brand new source of support. Our SEND team have set up a new email address for any of our students who receive support for their Special Educational Needs (whether or not they have an EHCP). The address is askmyTA@macclesfieldacademy.org and our TAs will be monitoring the inbox every day, ready to support by email or by a phone call. I am really proud of this development and grateful to our SEND team for the initiative they have shown in setting it up. Please remember that **all** students can also email their subject teachers using the addresses which can be found at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/staff-emails/>.

Second, we know that organising the day can be difficult, before Easter I suggested the following timetable:

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
Reading	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day	20-30 minutes at the start of the day
Session 1	English	Maths	English	Maths	English
Session 2	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)	One other subject (possibly chosen from today's timetable)
Session 3	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg an instagram challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg a challenge)	One other subject or activity (eg a challenge)

Several parents have said they have found this helpful or have shared their own variations on it. I think some parents in Year 7 and 8 especially valued the reassurance that it was not necessary to attempt every single task that was set! Some also asked about timings. I think there needs to be some flexibility about this to fit in with family routines and the need to share equipment with other family members. However I would urge parents to do everything they can to ensure students are up

and active by 9.00. Having had two teenagers myself, I know that this can be a challenge. I also know, however, that the return to school (whenever it comes) will be much harder if that habit is lost.

Third, I want to remind you of the support that is available via the homeworking section of our website at www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working. This includes:

- Guidance on keeping your children safe while they are spending so much time on line at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/e-safety/>
- Reading lists and links to sources of free reading materials at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/keep-on-reading/>
- Support for helping children adjust to the challenges of home learning as well as technical advice on the use of IT resources such as Show My Homework, One Note and Microsoft Office at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/resources/>
- Advice on the steps to take if you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of any of our students during the closure period at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/emergency-contact/>
- A vast range of websites and online resources to support learning in every single subject- and provide ideas for other activities at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/subjects/>
- Guidance on how to get technical support from our IT team at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/technical-support/> (please also remember that Mr Mugridge is also happy to provide advice on any IT related issue; he can be contacted at les.mugridge@macclesfieldacademy.org)
- Links to other useful sites including the Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize (both of which began broadcasting lessons this week) at <https://www.macclesfieldacademy.org/home-working/useful-links/>

I hope all of this is helpful. If there is any other source of support you think would be useful, please let me know. Miss Halsall, by the way, is currently in discussions with Show My Homework about ways in which it could be adapted to meet the current circumstances; we hope to have some further news on that soon.

Finally some additional points relating to older students:

- Mr Reed has set up a survey for Year 11 students to check on your current plans for next year. This can be accessed via Show My Homework. Please complete it as soon as possible as this will help us to work with A level providers and the College to support you in preparing for your new courses.
- We are currently finalising pathway groups for next year and will publish details within the next few weeks. Once these are sorted, we will begin to set work to help you prepare for these new courses.
- Ofqual have published details of what they are planning to do with awarding grades for the non GCSE courses (eg Enterprise and Marketing, Graphic Design, Hospitality and Catering, Sport and Travel and Tourism). Although there are some technical issues they are consulting on, it looks as though this process will be essentially the same as for GCSEs. **Most importantly, they are clear it will apply to all students whatever their age and whatever school year they are in.** This is a vitally important step forward and makes it almost certain that the outcome of the GCSE

consultation will be (as our representative bodies are already advising us) that the centre assessment process will apply to students in Year 9 and Year 10 as well as those in Year 11. Thank you so much to everybody who has applied pressure to bring about this change in policy.

I said at the start of this email this was a time when we would need to be resolute and dig deep. The victory that we have won on behalf of our Year 9 and Year 10 students shows what we can achieve if we remain positive and remain together. We opened the Academy in 2011 with an explicit commitment in our core values to using the power of positive thought. Never has that power of positive thought been more important. Never has that special human ability to hope for a better future been more essential. That is why I am going to finish with one of my favourite poems, written, as it happens, by Emily Dickinson who lived much of her life in what we would now call social isolation:

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops - at all –

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -

And sore must be the storm -

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm –

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -

And on the strangest Sea -

Yet - never - in Extremity,

It asked a crumb - of me

Keep positive, take care and stay safe



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