

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

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Dear Parents and Carers,

What a first week back! There are many changes and developments to inform you of and I apologise again for the length of this letter.

Year 11 and Year 13 exams

I know that in many households there will be concern over Boris Johnson's announcement about GCSE and A Level exams this summer and what this will mean. Gavin Williamson made a statement on Wednesday about teacher estimated grades being used, but we await more specific details. I will keep you updated once we know more.

In the meantime, please reassure your sons and daughters that the best thing they can do at this time is engage fully with their blended learning and complete all the tasks their teachers ask of them to the best of their abilities.

BTEC

BTEC exams will go ahead as scheduled in January. Students have been preparing for these and we are able to run these safely in the Sports Hall due to small numbers.

Year 12 and 13 internal exams

Year 12 and Year 13 internal exams will be rescheduled and we will therefore postpone our Sixth Form January grades event.

Remote Learning

As you know from Mrs Best's email on Monday, we are taking a blended learning approach to remote learning, taking into account the feedback you gave us last time. We have changed the layout of the work on firefly and we have introduced some live lessons on MS TEAMS to provide face-to-face contact with teachers. There are also key pieces of work that pupils will be expected to submit and pupils will receive feedback on these.

This combined approach ensures we are able to ensure continuity of provision at home alongside staffing our key worker classes.

We have received some communication from parents saying we're setting too much work and some saying it's too little. We are responding to these comments and we thank you for your feedback and your patience whilst we work to get the balance right in these early stages. If you need any support please visit our website in the first instance.

Support with firefly: <https://ripleystthomas.com/using-firefly/>

Support with TEAMS: [Microsoft Word - MS Teams Pupil Guide \(ripleystthomas.com\)](#)

If you have any further questions, please do get in touch with your child's progress leader in the first instance via Parentline.

Believe.....

Principal Mrs C Walmsley
Chair of Governors Mrs J Garnett

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Exercise Books

We are aware that some children have not got their exercise books at home due to the sudden switch to remote education. We suggest that they complete their work on paper where this is the case. If you are struggling for resources, please get in touch with Mrs Best.

Attendance at Live Lessons

We have been very pleased with the number of pupils logging on to their live lessons. These are a learning curve for teachers and pupils alike so we thank you for your patience while we get to grips with this new way of working.

We have been made aware that some pupils have received a 'click' for not attending a live lesson. Please accept my apology if that has happened to your child – this was in error. Schools have been asked to monitor engagement in remote learning so we set up a system to track which pupils were not engaging in live lessons with the sole purpose of providing support if necessary. We were under the impression that this would be internal data only, but we have been made aware that these clicks appear on the parent portal. We have since removed this function and any 'attendance at live lesson' clicks will be deleted. We will explore other ways of tracking this information to ensure we can provide help where needed.

Key Worker Attendance

Please let us know via the usual absence line if your child is not going to be in school. If you have requested a key worker place but your child does not appear in school we will need to make contact for safeguarding reasons so it is helpful for us to know if they are not going to be in.

If you already have a key worker place confirmed and you need to change your days, please let us know via the absence line rather than using the keyworker email address.

Lateral Flow Testing

We have been asked by the DFE to continue plans for lateral flow testing in school. We are making good progress and will be ready to test our staff and the children currently in school in our key worker / vulnerable groups over the next two weeks. We will be sending out more information and consent forms shortly.

Worship

We are continuing to offer worship during lockdown and pupils will receive an invite via Firefly. This week Michael shares an interview with Jackie Garnett, our Chair of Governors.

Mrs Garnett shared with us one her favourite verses: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Philippians 4:8). At these times, when there is much that we are concerned about, it can bring us all comfort to focus on the things we can be grateful for, however big or small.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Walmsley
Principal