

8th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Although it has been less than a week since I last wrote to you there have been a number of developments that I need to update you about. Please see the details below and as always, do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or queries. (Please email your child's year team - eg. For Year 9, email year9@tla.school).

Year 11 Grading

This week the Secretary of State for Education announced that Year 11 Grades would be calculated based on Teacher Assessments. Whilst we have not had any confirmation about the process yet, I assume this is likely to take a similar form to last year. Mr Pulford will be producing an assembly for Year 11s next week to explain more about our knowledge of the current situation, please ensure your child watches this assembly. We will also send a link to you by email so that you can also see the details. At this stage, it is my intention to complete the Pre-Public Exams when Year 11 return to school. The exams, which were planned for January will be postponed not cancelled. Whilst we know Year 11 students will not take final exams, we will need to provide evidence to support our Teacher Assessed Grades. For this reason, I urge students to make every effort to engage fully with the remote learning that is being provided and to revise properly for these exams. I know some Year 11 students are finding it difficult to motivate themselves following the announcements this week and I can understand this. I do, however, strongly believe that every student has the opportunity to make good effort and work towards the grades they aspire to reach in every subject.

Live Online Lesson Trials

This week has seen a number of live online lessons being taught. The trials have started well and the feedback from the staff and students who have been involved has been very positive. We will be extending this next week and I hope that the majority of students will get a chance to experience at least one live online lesson. These will be accessed through the Google Classroom and can be joined by clicking the Google Meet Link within a particular subject's Google Classroom. More details can be found in the attached document for students.

There are a number of key aspects that I need to make you aware of so that we can ensure these lessons run smoothly and are as effective as possible. Students will be asked to ensure that when they join the Google Meet they turn their camera and microphone off. The live lessons will be recorded. Students should not participate in a live lesson, if they do not consent to the lesson being recorded by the school. (If this is the case the recorded lesson will be available later in the day as a video on the Google Classroom so that students can catch up on what they missed in the live lesson). Parents/Carers must ensure that their child does not record any aspect of the lesson either in video or photograph form (including screenshots). If concerns are raised that a student has recorded or photographed parts of a lesson, disciplinary action may be taken.

Student Account Password

Students should be careful that their password for their Google Account is not shared with other people. If they think others have access to their account they should email support@tla.school to update their password.

Tutor Contact

From Monday 11th January, Tutors will make contact with their Tutor Group via Google Classroom and not via email. This is to allow Tutors to more easily track which students have responded. The contact will take place in the form of a 'Question', set in their Google Classroom. This will contain a message from the Tutor, plus one

or two questions that the students will need to answer. They do this by typing their answer into the box in the top right hand corner. A guide on how to do this will be attached to each Google Classroom. If students do not 'turn in' an answer to this question, the Tutor will follow this up with an email to the parent, asking them to remind the student to reply.

In these periods of lockdown, it is essential that students make regular, weekly contact with their Tutor. The school will use a variety of support mechanisms in order to ensure this happens. This could include phone contact, text messages to parents, online meetings or home visits, if we have not been able to establish contact with a student.

Google Classroom/Remote Learning Expectations - Help Sheet

Further to previous correspondence, we have now set up the facility for parents to be able to help their child's remote learning via the Google Classroom. You should receive an email to explain how to set this facility up within the next few days. Students are expected to follow their normal school timetable during the lockdown in terms of work completed on each day. We aim to have the work uploaded for students by 8am each day as we recognise each home circumstance can differ in terms of the working environment. Attached to this email is a help guide for logging into a student's school email and google classroom. For password issues please contact: support@tla.school

Loan Devices for Remote Learning

We still have a number of devices available for loan, we also have a small number of mobile wireless routers if students are unable to access the internet. To enquire about borrowing a device or to request help with internet access please contact Mr Pulford (michael.pulford@tla.school)

DfE Support with Mobile Data Allowances

The DfE are implementing a scheme in conjunction with most major mobile phone networks to increase the data allowance of mobile devices. Currently the offer ranges from company to company and this can only be applied for through the school, If you wish for the school to apply on your behalf for an increase to your students mobile data allowance to lower cost and help aid students to access remote learning, please complete the following form: <https://forms.gle/fpqhbtToQKUGjU3f8>

Coronavirus Testing

The Government has published that schools are to undertake COVID-19 testing in schools. We have been asked to do mass testing of all students when they return to school. This test works even if you are asymptomatic and will help reduce the number of students needing to isolate for 10 days if they are in close contact with somebody who tests positive. Instead of isolating we are being asked to complete testing over a 7 day period which will mean that they are allowed to enter the school site, if their result is negative. Although we encourage the testing, it is voluntary but students will need to isolate for 10 days if they do not participate in the 7 day testing period. This testing is also for staff on a weekly basis to help keep the school open when we do return to face to face teaching. Further guidance will be sent out in due course including a permission form to enable us to complete the testing. Once again please note that although we encourage everybody to take the tests, they are voluntary.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us on the email addresses listed above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Essex', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr S Essex
Headteacher