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8th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Spring Term Update

I hope this update finds you and your families well? I am writing to provide you with a few pieces of information as we head towards the end of the first half term of 2021. It seems that much has happened in a very few weeks, further compounded by the extreme winter weather we are experiencing this week.

I want to start by thanking you for all your support in helping your children remaining focussed on their learning these past six weeks. The challenges of working from home and remote learning are more evident than ever, and your continued support will have helped your children achieve success with their learning this term.

Key Dates

Just two key dates to highlight, the last day of this half term is this week, Thursday 11th February 2021. Friday 12th will continue to be a Staff PD Day as per the original academy calendar so there will be no live lessons and the academy will be closed to all students. The academy re-opens on Monday 22nd February, when remote learning with 'live' lessons will restart. Whilst it is really challenging in the current circumstances it is important that students (and you) have a break from their learning this half term. I know we all cannot go out, or away due to the lockdown restrictions, but students need to switch off from the screens and formal learning time that they have been undertaking each day so that they can restart the next half term ready and refreshed.

Key Critical Worker Provision

In line with the Government directive we have continued to provide places for children of key critical workers. Whilst we have been able to accommodate all requests to date there has been an increase in pressure on places for this provision in recent weeks. I ask that you only make a request for the provision if it is absolutely essential to support your work as a key critical worker. The Government lockdown advice is to 'stay at home'. Every additional interaction with another individual increases the risk of transmitting COVID and whilst we have updated our risk assessments and taken further precautions in how we have set up the academy these risks are still there for everyone. Thank you again with your support in this matter.

As has been previously communicated to the relevant parents this provision will not be running over half term. The academy will be closed to students, as would be the case for a normal academy holiday. As stated above the academy will re-open for the Key Critical Worker Provision on Monday 22nd February.

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Determined to be...

'the best that we can be'

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Exams and Remote Learning after Half Term

In line with the Government announcements earlier this term, remote learning will resume for the first two weeks of the next half term from Monday 22nd February. We are still, as is everyone, uncertain when this may change. It has been suggested that the Government will make an announcement over the half term break about the timelines concerning this. We will of course respond accordingly. However, it is crucial that all students continue to engage in their remote learning after half term. The students have been brilliant with their engagement to date and we would want to encourage this to continue after the half term break.

This is equally important for our Year 11 students. Even though we, again, are awaiting confirmation of what the Government intends to do and how they will advise schools and academies on dealing with student grades this summer, the simple message to our Year 11s is that they can still influence their grades. As I have previously written, if the system has any resemblance to what we were asked to do last year, then teachers will need evidence to award grades. As has been muted this could be via academy assessments (not yet confirmed) but equally class work, past paper exam questions and tests set by teachers will all be important. This also applies to the vocational courses where a significant part of the qualification is coursework. This coursework will continue to form the basis of evidence for grades. For these reasons it is crucial, like the majority of Year 11 students have been doing, for them to continue to engage fully in their lessons and the work set.

Keeping In Touch Calls

As part of our systems to keep in contact with students during this lockdown, we have instigated 'Keeping in Touch' calls. Whilst we are seeing most of our students regularly in their lessons, due to the nature of remote learning the more 'informal' conversations we would have around the academy with them cannot easily take place. As a result, we wanted a mechanism where students know that they will have someone who will contact them to speak about not only their learning about things in general. For some students this will be a brief welfare check, for other students it may be a longer conversation. The idea is that it is an additional support for our students and an opportunity for them to raise any academy related concerns. We will continue these calls for as long as we are asked to work in this way.

Free School Meals

For students who are entitled to Free School Meals who are not regularly attending the academy during this time we have moved towards providing vouchers via the national voucher system. This will continue via Norfolk County Council for half term week, before reverting to the national voucher scheme after the holiday. Again, my understanding is that the scheme will continue for as long as we are working in this way.

COVID Testing

I wrote many weeks ago about how schools and academies were preparing to set up COVID testing for staff and students. This was superseded by the fact that we went into a national lockdown. Whilst we have been able to set up some limited testing in the academy in the subsequent weeks we have yet to receive any further confirmation about how we will be expected to roll this out to students when they properly return, if at all. Again, as we know more, we will pass this information on to you.

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The following two sections are a reminder of the information that was already sent out by our Safeguarding Lead, Ms Ogden:

Supporting Parents Helpfinder (Young Minds)

Times are tough for many people right now. Parents find themselves pulled in many different directions and children may be struggling being in the house for so much longer than usual.

A mixture of concern about covid, work from home and children at home, along with a possible financial impact make for a stressful household.

Young Minds have created a useful 'Supporting Parents Helpfinder'. By answering six questions, parents can find out how to support their child's mental health during the pandemic (and beyond).

Find the help finder here: <https://youngminds.org.uk/supporting-parents-helpfinder/>

Top tips for understanding your teenager in the 'new normal'

Being a teenager is tough at the best of times. But this isn't the best of times. So, as a parent, how do you continue to support your teenager? What do their behaviours and emotions tell you about what's going on for them? And how do you untangle those which are an understandable response to the restrictions of the pandemic, those which are typical of the teenage years, and those which might warrant more specialist help?

BBC has written a great article answering a number of questions parents have on how to support their teenager during this time: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zctjky>

Academy Contact

To contact make contact with staff from the academy from Friday 12th February, please can you use the office@tnha.org.uk email address. Please be aware that whilst there will be some staff working on the site over the holiday not all staff will be available and have access to their emails. The office@tnha.org.uk email address will be checked regularly and any messages can be passed on to the relevant members of staff.

Without doubt the start of 2021 has brought a range of challenges for everyone. I want to thank you again for the support you have given in helping your children engage successfully with their remote learning. This is no small task and I know that however great our students can be, they will need this reassurance and support that only you can provide in the current climate.

I will reiterate it is important that students and you have a pause from learning over the half term break so that students can come back refreshed after the holiday. I wish you all a restful half term break and look forward to seeing our students return to their remote learning on Monday 22nd February.

Kind regards and stay safe.



Mr. Woodhouse
Principal