

## Headteacher update - 16

Dear Parents/Carers

It has certainly been another eventful week, at least now we have some clarity and consistency for this half term. Boris Johnson announced that schools should remain closed until further notice, except for children of critical workers and our most vulnerable children. Moreover, schools will only re-open when the scientific advice indicates that it is right to do so.

We also know that GCSE and A Level exams are cancelled, we await to hear how centre assessed grades will be awarded.

As you will be aware our remote education is provided by live Microsoft Teams lessons with further resources being made available through SMHW. This has started for all year groups, thank you for your kind words and positive feedback. If you are having any teething problems or trouble accessing the lessons, please do email [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk) we are here to help.

This is still a steep learning curve for everyone and we fully appreciate the part you are playing to ensure your child/ren are engaged in learning.

We have our in-school provision up and running for Critical worker and Vulnerable students. The definition of vulnerable has been widened to include students who do not have a suitable environment to study in at home or who do not have suitable IT resources at home. If you feel that you may fall into this category, please contact us via [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk)

From next week we will be starting weekly phone calls to parents just to see if there is anything else that we can do to support you or your child.

Thank you to the parents who offered their help with the mass testing, obviously this will not be going ahead at the moment, but when we know the plans for after half term we will be back in touch. We have set up weekly testing for our Key worker and Vulnerable students as well as testing for all staff, we have capacity to run this with school staff at the moment.

We would still like you to consider consenting to testing, as it is likely that this will form part of the return to school, the consent form can be accessed on [this link](#)

If your employment situation has changed recently you may be entitled to claim Free School meals.

Hertfordshire County Council could save you over £400 in school meals every year. If you receive one of the following benefits, then you could be eligible for free school meals worth over £400 per child per year.

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Child Tax Credit (providing you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Support under Pat VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

Your child may also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:

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- younger than the compulsory age for starting school
- in full time education

During School closures families entitled to free school meals can receive a meal kit each week please complete [this form](#) to order your pack which can be collected from school.

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they will remain eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they are in on 31 March 2022. To apply, or for more information, visit [www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals](http://www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals)

Below is a roundup of information and resources that you may find useful:

### **DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION UPDATE – YEAR 11 AND 13**

Earlier this week, Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, announced that GCSE and A Level examinations would be cancelled for all Year 11 and 13 students in the summer examination series of 2021. The Education Secretary told the Commons there would be “training and support” for teachers in predicting grades, “to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently” and to make sure they are not disadvantaged in their progress to sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, training or work because of these unprecedented conditions.

He added that details of exactly how results will be decided will be “fine-tuned in consultation with Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representative organisations”.

As the grades for qualifications will be based on evidence from student work, it is essential that all students actively engage with live lessons and the remote work set by teachers.

#### ***What about BTEC and CTEC qualifications?***

As you will be aware, planned January Vocational examinations continue to be a topic being debated in the national press.

The Department for Education has stated: "No student will be disadvantaged if they can't take their exam or assessment or decide that they don't want to".

Pearson (BTECs) have stated: "Learners unable to take their assessment this January may be able to take their assessment at a later date. If that is not possible, we will put in place arrangements to ensure no learner is disadvantaged".

OCR (Cambridge Technicals) have stated: "There may be an opportunity to take their assessment at a future date. If this is not possible due to arrangements still to be announced for this summer, we will work with the DfE and Ofqual to make sure they are treated fairly."

As a school, given the pressures and anxiety that many students will currently be experiencing about the fact that they are facing sitting public examinations during a nationwide lockdown, we feel that it is likely to be in the best interests of most students **to not attend their exams**, given the assurances that they will still be awarded the grade that they deserve. If any students feel strongly that they would like to sit their exam, please contact Miss Townsend ([m.townsend@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:m.townsend@barnwell.herts.sch.uk)) by 3pm Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, and we will discuss this further.

We hope that this goes some way to alleviate the stress and pressure that students are under and allows them to give their full attention to their remote learning, which it is essential that they continue to engage with.

With regards to summer vocational examinations, we are awaiting further guidance.

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### LIVE LESSONS AND SCHOOLWORK UPDATE

To ensure our live lessons run smoothly we ask that your child is fully prepared with all of the relevant equipment and it would be fantastic if your child could layout their books and resources for the day ahead each morning. We will still be setting work via SMHW, it is important that your child checks this platform regularly and completes the tasks as directed by their teacher.

A reminder that if your child's teacher is unwell during the national lockdown period they will not be delivering live lessons, however work will still be uploaded to Google classroom for completion and where possible the department will look to rearrange and support their colleagues by delivering other teachers' lessons on their behalf.

 [MS Teams Live Lesson Student Protocols.docx](#)

### ACCESSING LIVE LESSONS USING CONSOLES

There have been several reports in the media that students are able to access school resources such as Microsoft Office applications and Teams through their Xbox or PlayStation consoles. We can confirm that this is the case and may help families with the distribution of devices to support home learning.

If this is something you would like to explore with your child(ren) we may be in a position to support with the loan of a keyboard or mouse. Please contact [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk) if you would like to discuss the possibility of loaning equipment during the lockdown period.

Instructions for console use are as follows:

#### Xbox online learning

- Power on your Xbox and wait for the home screen to become visible.
- (Optional) Plug a keyboard into the Xbox's USB slot.
- Hit the glowing Xbox logo button in the centre of the controller and select "My Games and Apps".
- Find and select "Microsoft Edge".
- Use the browser to type in the web address of your school's online learning platform

#### PlayStation 4 online learning

- Power on your PlayStation and wait for the home screen to become visible.
- Head to the content area – the horizontal row of large icons used to launch games and applications.
- Scroll to the right until you come across the Internet Browser (a www icon with dots around it) and select it.
- Use the browser to type in the web address of your school's online learning platform.

### RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ONLINE LEARNING

As in the previous lockdown period, there are considerable online education resources to support students and schools with remote learning.

BBC Daily lessons can be accessed via this link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Oak National Academy lessons can be accessed via this link: <https://www.thenational.academy/>

These resources are excellent if your child(ren) would like to supplement the work set by their teachers.

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### **KEY WORKER AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN SCHOOL PROVISION**

The school remains open next week for Vulnerable children and Critical worker children only. Please support the government lockdown measures by keeping your child at home wherever possible and encouraging stringent social distancing. If your situation at home has changed and you require your child to attend the in-school provision, please email [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk)

### **WELLBEING, SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORT**

In these difficult times, mental health and wellbeing should be at the forefront of our minds. As previously stated, education is important but the mental and physical health of children and young people is the priority.

Safer Places, an organisation dedicated to supporting people affected by abuse have launched a new live chat service:

The new service enables anyone experiencing abuse to chat directly with a member of the [Safer Places team](#).

The measures announced to tackle coronavirus (COVID 19) have seen day to day life change dramatically and undoubtedly made it harder for people to access support services This new service provides the opportunity to access support discreetly.

The service provides information and supports individuals to make choices about how to increase their safety, the safety of their family and make decisions about their future. Safer Places online chat service is available both day and night and enables those who feel safer seeking support online to chat to a qualified professional to get confidential support and advice when, where, and how they want it.

### **HEALTHY LIVING**

One of the fundamental elements of wellbeing is exercise, especially when children and families are at home. We know many families have been enjoying the daily Joe Wicks workouts, Sport England have an initiative called #StayInWorkOut that provides links to various options for maintaining an active lifestyle

[https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#join\\_the\\_movement](https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#join_the_movement)

### **Happy PEople Podcast**

Mr Goodman has recorded our very first Sport and Well-being podcast. He will be aiming to interview various members of staff each week to discuss their sporting journeys and how sport has helped them with areas such as healthy lifestyle and mental health.

Please click the link to listen.

<https://anchor.fm/thehappypeople/episodes/Episode-1---The-Canary-eokel0>



### **Family Support**

Hertfordshire County Council have continually been working with schools to ensure all students and families get the appropriate support. Most recently we received an email regarding support for children and young people with additional needs at home or in the school setting. The Integrated Services for Learning teams want to make

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sure parents/carers of these children have access to the support needed. There is one dedicated telephone contact number where the educational psychology service will respond and, if necessary, signpost parents/carers to someone who can offer specific advice and support. This contact line 01992 588574 is available Monday-Friday between 2:00- 4:30pm.

Hertfordshire County Council also have a website offering Mental Health and wellbeing support and advice to young people, families and professionals around COVID-19 called JUSTTALK.

<https://www.justtalkherts.org/news/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus.aspx>

### **ONLINE SAFETY**

National Online Safety have created a series of guides to promote e-safety for all. Please click the link

<https://nationaleducationgroup.cmail20.com/t/t-l-nkrhuy-ajlijtthh-y/>

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

As a community we are aware that many parents/carers have been affected by places of work closing and earning potential being minimised. A reminder that we have the food bank and clothing bank in school and these are available to anyone in need please just contact [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk) and this can be confidentially arranged.

The school is always just an email away if you have concerns about your family but below are a few links that may help with financial pressures or queries:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>

All forms of advice, including employment and finances affected by Coronavirus

[https://www.stepchange.org/?channel=ppc&&WT.srch=1&WT.mc\\_id=270049&WT.seg\\_1=step%20change%20debt&gclid=Cj0KQCjpfHzBRCiARIsAHHzyZprzWaWlUAJCCdl\\_OnAbdj3oBRFtb5n2NhJsloPhjfATi3vfNGZ3AaAoTIEALw\\_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.stepchange.org/?channel=ppc&&WT.srch=1&WT.mc_id=270049&WT.seg_1=step%20change%20debt&gclid=Cj0KQCjpfHzBRCiARIsAHHzyZprzWaWlUAJCCdl_OnAbdj3oBRFtb5n2NhJsloPhjfATi3vfNGZ3AaAoTIEALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds)

A Debt Charity with information about who to contact for support and advice

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

A site for new applications to Universal Credit

<https://www.loansmart.org.uk/#about-loan-sharks>

Tips about how to avoid illegal loan companies

### ***Increasing data allowances on mobile devices to support disadvantaged children***

The Government have a scheme that temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education during the lockdown period.

If you would like to know more about this, please email [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk)

If you would like clarification regarding any school matters, please do not hesitate to get in contact via [communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk](mailto:communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk)

Thank you once again for your support and have a lovely weekend.

Mr Fitzpatrick

Mr Roberts

Executive Headteacher

Head of School