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Tuesday 5th January 2021

Dear parents and carers

Following the government's announcement last night of a national lockdown and school closures, I am afraid I am fast becoming your most regular correspondent! The Senior Leadership Team met at school today to put plans in place for remote learning until half term. For most of you this will mean a return to the routine of home learning that we established together earlier in the year; for Year 7 and a few other new entrants to school - welcome to Fairfield Live!

We take our remote learning very seriously and we expect all our students to attend the live lessons and complete the tasks set. All our students have been trained in school to use Google Classroom and we hope that most parents and carers have taken the opportunity to set themselves up with access via the link sent home twice earlier in the term. From Monday 11th January until February half term we will be providing a full timetable of blended learning for everyone; a combination of taught, live streamed lessons and work to complete and submit at home. The live lessons will take place via Google Meet; you will be sent a timetable and lesson codes via email later on this week. The lessons are only available to Fairfield students, who will need to log on using their 'gvsc' email account. Lessons will be in the usual teaching groups and will largely follow the 'normal' in-school timetable. We adhere to strict protocols for online lessons, all of which are detailed in the special appendix to our safeguarding policy and the Acceptable Use Policy, both of which are available on our website. We will also be creating a special 'Covid' area on our website so that you can more easily find letters, timetables etc.

When our students returned in September, we found that those who had attended the online lessons and completed work at home as directed during lockdown were in fact not so very far behind where we would have expected. We fully intend to make sure that our students are disadvantaged as little as possible by learning remotely for the next few weeks and hope that you will support regular learning at home. We will be recording and monitoring attendance at online lessons and will be following up any absences - just as we would in school. We understand that there may be a clash of lessons sometimes - if this happens we suggest that one child watches their lesson on a smartphone, ipad or other electronic device - it would be very helpful if you could remind your child to download the Google Classroom app on their phone if they haven't done so already. This will be very useful for them when they need to submit work - if they cannot do it any other way staff are happy to accept a clear photo uploaded to Google Classroom via a phone. We have a limited number of laptops that we can lend from school if needed; these will be prioritised for those students with the greatest need who have no other feasible option to access remote learning - please let us know if you think you need one.

Some of you have already contacted me regarding a place in school for your child because you are a key worker or your child is classed as vulnerable. We are limiting the places available due to staffing constraints and we are also prioritising years 7 and 8 as being the year groups who are perhaps rather young to be left at

home on their own for long periods. If you are a key worker or have a vulnerable child *and have no other viable option* (eg you are unable to create a 'childcare bubble' with a friend or family member) then please contact me via admin to request a place. Our over-riding principle is still to have as few children in school as possible, in order to keep everyone safe. School transport is expected to run from Monday 11th January, but we will write home at the end of the week to the relevant families with further arrangements.

In addition to academic learning, we remain very mindful of the impact of lockdown and working from home on mental health and well-being generally. Joe Wicks may be returning as 'the nation's PE teacher' but our PE staff can more than give him a run for his money, so watch this space! During the next five weeks, you will be contacted by your child's form teacher and some of you will also find that our Learning Managers, senior staff or Learning Support Assistants will also be in touch. We like to speak to you, but we need to speak with students too, just to see if there is anything we can help with. Our counsellor will continue to work with students in online sessions and we also have a range of information and links about various organisations on our website which you might find useful to look at if you are worried about something and need support.

We are very conscious that this is a particularly worrying time for Years 10 and 11. BTec exams are still going ahead later this week and on Monday, but the government is going to put different arrangements in place for the summer exams. As soon as we have clear information on this, we will let you know. At the moment, it is very important that all KS4 students carry on working as hard as they can, attending lessons and completing tasks set. Whatever happens, schools will be asked to provide information about students based on concrete evidence, so we need to have as much positive feedback as we can about your work, your attitude and your achievement in every subject.

We will share information with you about other changing aspects of the situation whenever we have it. The mass testing programme for schools is not taking place at the moment; we expect it to be reinstated later and will let you know when we are informed.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for the many messages of support we have had at school over the past few weeks. It really does lift our spirits to know that you feel we are doing a good job in difficult circumstances. From Monday the school office will be open so that you can phone in if needed; the admin email address is monitored several times every day so is also a good point of contact. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you are worried or need to discuss anything.

Best wishes

Sue Gaston
Head Teacher