



HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

6th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Quite a long letter so an audio version is available here if you would rather listen to me: <https://youtu.be/Jjjch0SFCeE>

I cannot quite believe that we are in the 7th week of not being together as a community. For almost all of our students (and staff) it will be the longest period of time spent away from school since they first started in their education journey. We wanted to say again that it has definitely been a strange and challenging time, so it is understandable if you and your child feel anxious and frustrated at the moment. We are here for you every step of the way as we figure this all out together and the input and support you have given your child over these last 7 difficult weeks will have been amazing.

Remember, if you have any concerns about helping your child learn or you need any other support from the Academy, please let us know by contacting your child's House Team. If your child has any issues at all, they should contact their tutor as the first point of contact so we can help.

We of course hope that this situation changes very soon and we can plan for a safe return to the building and to our daily routines. Until that time I wanted to just update on a few areas.

Show My Homework – Show My Homework is now back up and running. All students have been emailed a number of times with instructions on how to log in. They merely need to go to this website (<https://www.satchelone.com/login>) and select that they are a student and then click 'Sign in with Office 365' and they will be able to log in using their school email address and password they use to access email. If they have any problems please ask them to contact their Tutor for support. Work is set for all subjects according to the student timetable for the week but remains available for 7 days so please tell students to not worry if they are not able to stick to the allotted lessons and timings for any particular day. Work is submitted back into SMHW and allows teachers to give feedback to students. With SMHW there is an app on Apple and Android devices which may help with access to work on mobile devices and tablets.

We are hoping to 'onboard' parents for whom we hold an email address over the coming weeks. This will generate your own login and password ability and you will be able to login and see exactly what work is set for your child(ren) along with what they submit. In the meantime you can see an overview of what work is being set across year groups by different teachers on different days by visiting this website <https://bristolmet.satchelone.com/school/homeworks/calendar>

We appreciate that not all young people have meaningful access to devices or the internet so are continuing to provide printed packs of work each week where they have been requested. Our admin teams are trying their hardest to keep up with demand in these packs but would ask for your understanding in that simple things like getting photocopier engineers and photocopy supplies in the current climate is much harder than usual which leads to some delays. We are also now having to take our own post to the sorting office as Royal Mail are having to cope with reduced staffing levels. We assure you that we are sending packs out and thank you for your patience if they take a little longer to reach you currently.

Provision of Laptops and Internet Routers - As per my last letter we have applied for devices and 4G internet routers through the Government scheme for students that would qualify. We are also trying to procure some additional devices of our own to deploy to families in need who wouldn't qualify through the Government scheme. I will update on this as it progresses but would expect it to take a good number of weeks before these devices are delivered. The Government are working with telecoms providers to ensure that educational websites are not counted in data use for mobile devices so if you or your child use your mobile phone to access SMHW, BBC Bitesize or other online educational platforms you should find these not using your mobile data bundle going forward.

National information for Parents/Carers - The Government are maintaining a website specifically with information for Parents/Carers relating to education settings during the coronavirus pandemic. This website can be found here and is updated regularly:



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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Provision of Student Reports - We were due to have a number of Parents' Evenings in the weeks after we closed which would have produced reports for students and Parents/Carers on progress and other areas. We understand that many Parents/Carers would still like to receive reports, particularly for Year 7 students as you would have been receiving your first Academy report, but at this time we do not feel able to produce a meaningful report. The systems we use to produce reports and collate the necessary data and information are not available to most staff remotely. I would also be hesitant in providing reports where there would then be limited ability to discuss interpretation and actions moving forward. Any assessments or information collected previously is still stored so once we are open and back into some form of 'normal' we will look at producing reports and updates for you. We thank you for your patience and understanding with this matter.

Weekly Assemblies – Every Wednesday at 9am we have an assembly film streamed for students to watch (though it remains available after the 9am Wednesday launch for students who could not be available online at 9am Wednesday). We're trying to do this to bring students together on a common theme at a common time to foster a sense of community spirit at that moment. The link is sent every week to students emails (so please keep encouraging your child to check their emails as regularly as they are able). It is also in the weekly newsletter that we are sending out to parents and students (which is also on the website) so parents can watch the assembly if it is of interest.

'Zoom' or other Live Lessons – Many students have expressed an interest in having "live" lessons or online video lessons. Some parents have also contacted us to ask if this is something we are considering. Initial advice from 'Safeguarding in Schools' body was that online video systems should not be used until safeguarding measures and policies have been developed by each school. The use of online live video is a massive change for the way we normally operate so we have had to spend some time developing structures to enable this. We are now in a position where we can start to use live video if there is an exceptional need to but, in general, will still not be using it on a large scale approach. We are also mindful that live online lessons provide no flexibility for students with regards dynamics that many families are having to adapt to around sharing devices and competing for use of devices and internet time and therefore prefer to still provide learning which can fit around different schedules. It is something we continue to revisit as the closure continues.

Year 11 Grades – we continue to follow the published Ofqual guidance around the production of centre assessed grades for Year 11 students who would have sat their GCSEs this Summer. Separate communications specifically around Year 11 are produced and sent to students and families by Mrs Williams, Assistant Principal in charge of outcomes. These are emailed to Year 11 students so please do ask them to continue to check their emails regularly for these along with information from Mr Holmes (Careers Advisor) and from local Post-16 providers. Letters are also published on the website.

Finally, a little update on our previous communication about how some of our staff (and their families) have been trying to support some of our amazing frontline workers across the country. Members of the DT Department have continued to produce full face visors using our laser cutting equipment and have so far produced and distributed over 650 of these vital pieces of kit to the NHS, local medical surgeries and also local care homes. In addition, many of our staff turned their hands to borrowing sewing machines from the Textiles department and producing surgical hats and scrubs bags for use in our local hospitals. So far we have donated over 100 sets of these and are producing more imminently. We are really proud to be able to put some of our equipment and resources to supporting these amazing frontline staff when we are not able to use them with our student community currently.

We know that interest and some anxiety will continue to grow as we have speculation around the ending of the current period of lockdown and the potential re-opening of schools. We would like to take this opportunity to continue to assure you that as soon as we have any verified information from Government, DfE or the Local Authority around potential re-opening plans we will of course communicate this to our community. Until then we wish you all a safe time.

Yours faithfully,

Cameron Shaw
Principal