



## HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you all had a restful Easter break and welcome to our very first remote summer term!

We have all had to adapt to new ways of working, so I wanted to take the chance to say what an amazing job you are doing supporting your child's wellbeing and learning during this time.

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.

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.

Normally the start of Term 5 is when we really hit the ground for our Year 11 students entering their final exam season. I still cannot quite believe we will not have that this year. Further information will be coming to Year 11 students and families over the coming weeks as Ofqual continue to develop the system for awarding grades this Summer. Just a reminder to our Year 11 community that Ofqual are committed (as are we) to ensuring that no student is disadvantaged by this situation.

There have been a few developments which have been in the media so I just wanted to address them from our point of view and actual understanding of how they work:

*National Free School Meals Voucher Scheme (Edenred)* – The Government announced that they would introduce a national voucher scheme for free school meals rather than individual schools sorting out their own schemes (which is what we did in the first few weeks). Unfortunately, it has been apparent that the appointed provider (Edenred) was not able to cope with the demand and structure needed. They have been working tirelessly to make changes to bring their systems up to speed but unfortunately, we (along with it seems a large number of schools) have not received the vouchers we have ordered (yet) and therefore we have fallen back to ordering our own vouchers again so that our families do not go without. Those awaiting a voucher for this week should receive it today. We do apologise for the delay and hope that the national voucher scheme is working going forward.

*Expansion of entitlement to free school meals* – yesterday the Government announced a 'temporary extension to FSM entitlement' and I know for a number of families this seemed like a welcome announcement in the current difficult climate. Unfortunately, the criteria for new eligibility is very narrow. Please do have a [look at this link](#) and if you think the new criteria may make you eligible for FSM then contact us on [info@bristolmet.net](mailto:info@bristolmet.net)

*Access to Laptops and Mobile Broadband* – at the start of this week the Government announced a new scheme to provide laptop devices and 4G mobile broadband to a small number of students. Again, we understand that for many families this will seem like a very welcome scheme. It is important to highlight though that the criteria of who would qualify for the devices is relatively narrow. Currently, the Government have said it will be:

1) Students with social workers

2) Students in current Year 10 who are from lower income households and **do not** currently have access to a device and/or do not have access to an internet connection.





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The devices will belong to the Academy or local authority and will be loaned to students for the duration of the closure. The application process opens today and we will apply for all students with a social worker and also for the students in Year 10 who are on our list from the previous surveys we have sent out around access to devices. If you think your family may qualify for this scheme under the second criteria (Year 10 students from lower income households with no current access to a device and/or internet) and you have not previously communicated this to us then please email your Head of House, in confidence, to ensure we have your details. At the minute the scheme guidance is very loose in terms of how they will determine the number of devices to distribute to each Academy (the DfE have made no formal commitment to provide the number of devices each Academy requests) and there is also no timescale currently for the devices being delivered. We will of course update eligible families as this progresses and thank you in advance for your patience.

We miss having the pupils in the Academy, but we must continue to follow the government's guidance to keep everyone in our community safe. So, we are carrying on with providing online learning resources (and hard copy packs where requested). We are currently in the process of setting 'Show My Homework' back up so that it is easier to send and receive specific work with students. Please ask your child to ensure they regularly check their emails (if they have internet access) for latest communications and messages.

Our staff will be setting plenty of tasks for pupils to get stuck into over the summer term. Do remind your child to take breaks away from screens as well, and also make time for having fun and connecting with friends and family.

While we cannot say yet when we will be able to open the Academy fully, rest assured that we will continue doing our utmost to keep pupils learning and the Academy community connected.

Yours faithfully,

Cameron Shaw  
Principal