

Brine Leas School

Headteacher's Newsletter

(21st April 2020)



Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will have seen from recent government announcement, the country remains under the current restrictions for a minimum of a further three weeks and this includes school's being closed. Despite the closure and the effects that the virus and shielding measures are having on my staff, we continue to support our most vulnerable children and the children of key workers wherever we can.

I would like to thank our brilliant staff who have all continued to work over the Easter holiday in one form or another; be that supervising the children of key workers who came into school, contacting homes to check on vulnerable youngsters, working on and implementing the national free school meal vouchers scheme, helping source and provide PPE equipment for the NHS and of course all the work that is being done behind the scenes on calculating predicted grades for years 11 and 13.

This week we have a number of foci to continue to support our students, including but not restricted to:

- Support for our most vulnerable students
- Support for children of key workers
- Further parental and guidance over learning hours and online materials for all our students
- Development of the work available online for all students and direction to nationally available resources
- Transition work to support Year 11 students into Post 16 studies
- Planning for the incoming Year 7 students (current Year 6)
- Continuing with the Year 9 Options process
- Support for Year 13 students in the Post-18 destinations

Please continue to be aware that there we are operating with the absolute minimum of staff in the school at any one time, so it may take us a while to respond to your query. Please address all of your queries to our general email addresses, particularly info@brineleas.co.uk as this is regularly monitored.

The work being undertaken to rank and profile Y11 and Y13 in preparation for grade awards is well underway at present; OFQUAL has asked all schools to prepare to send the information through between the end of May and mid-June so that it can be processed and analysed and carefully filtered for accuracy and consistency. Nationally there is a recognition that Year 10 and Year 12 students are going to find the current situation particularly hard. Learning complex, new material without the support of a teacher is not ideal. In this regard I have picked up some awareness of some intelligent and considered

thinking about how to move forward. At present this is ranging from: significantly varying the style of any future exams (giving lots and lots of choice to enable all students to answer successfully); having a newly designed, short-term curriculum ready to teach in the time we have between returning to school and the summer exams to ensure that all students nationally come back with a equal chances; finally, there is always the potential to repeat the processes being undertaken this summer through using teacher assessments. One way or another it seems that a sensible and well-considered way forward should emerge soon, which will be most welcome. In the meantime, if you have sons and daughters in Years 10 and 12 please reassure them that a fair solution is being worked on at a national level and that they need to try to avoid getting upset or anxious about what will happen with their qualifications. The precedent has been set that a common-sense approach, designed to ensure maximum fairness to all, is going to be the way forward.

You will start to receive some updates from members of the school leadership team this week, the first of which was sent out yesterday in respect of Teaching and Learning. These will be sent out by email but can also be found on the website under the school closure information page and letters and information button.

Despite what you might have read or heard in the media over recent days, I can assure you there are currently no dates set or a timetable in place for when schools will re-open or how that will be managed. As soon as we are given any details regarding this, we will let you know.

You might have seen some headlines in the press about additional laptops being made available to schools and those youngsters who do not have IT access. We do not have any details about this as yet but when we do, we will be in touch.

I hope that you are all keeping well in these difficult times. Many thanks for your continued support.

David Cole
Headteacher