



# Whitburn Church of England Academy

An Academy with Specialist Status in Maths and Computing

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*'Excellence for All'*

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As we break for the Easter holidays today, I wanted to write to you with an update on a number of matters, as well as thank you again for your continued support in these challenging times.

## Home Learning and the Easter Holidays

Firstly thank you for all your efforts over the last two weeks; balancing your own workload and ensuring that school work is being completed by all the children in your household is no easy task! We are not asking students to complete any additional work over the Easter holiday. However, staff have uploaded work onto Microsoft Teams in readiness for April 20th, when 'term time' resumes. Some students may wish to start this work earlier, but please note that staff will not be available for advice or feedback until after the holiday period.

The vast majority of work will now be set on a weekly basis via Microsoft Teams, with RE doing this fortnightly. Students will receive a mixture of tasks to help them learn new content and 'assignments' with deadlines which will be marked by staff. Students are expected to complete all work set and are advised to spend the same amount of time completing this, as they would normally have in that subject per week. Microsoft Teams can be directly accessed via the Academy website under the 'pupil' tab. An overview of the curriculum content to be covered in each subject each week will still be put under the appropriate year group tab.

## Keeping safe

THANK YOU – you're all doing a great job! Most of us have been teaching for many years and we're well aware of the stresses and strains that teaching can bring and no doubt you have experienced some of this at home recently. All we ask of you is to direct your children to the work via the school website and try to keep them in a routine to complete it. Subject staff will be available, via email, (not during the Easter holiday) to answer any work related questions the students may have so please do not let this worry you. Pastoral staff in school have been busy making direct phone calls to a number of students over the last 2 weeks. We will be making more of these calls after Easter so that we will have made contact with everyone. Please refer to the Safeguarding information and links to mental health services on our website for further support available in how to keep healthy and safe.

## Examinations update

The following letter has been issued by Ofqual to students of the summer 2020 series examinations. [Ofqual letter to students](#) **Students should note that Academy staff are prohibited from discussing with students the grade they believe they were most likely to get if teaching,**

**Document available in large font, alternative language or audio format on request**



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**learning and exams had happened as planned.** We appreciate students may be concerned about their examination results and students should remember Ofqual has publically stated that: *'We want to reassure students waiting for news that we are doing everything we can to make sure they are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances.'*

### **School Closure**

To minimise risk of transmission and to prevent non-essential journeys, we have remained closed this week as we have had no eligible parents/carers needing this provision for their children. However, if there is a change to your circumstances and you are unable to make alternative arrangements, please email [office@whitburncofeacademy.org](mailto:office@whitburncofeacademy.org). We ask that all eligible parents/carers give us **at least 24 hours' notice**, so we can safely open the building and resource the correct number of staff required. Please note, the school will be closed to all on Good Friday (10<sup>th</sup> April) and Easter Monday (13<sup>th</sup> April).

### **National Voucher Scheme for those Eligible for Free School Meals**

The Government has announced the launch of their new supermarket voucher scheme for students who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. This weekly voucher scheme will start on Monday 20th April 2020 and, during this enforced closure period, will continue to be issued to eligible families during term-time periods. We will liaise with and circulate more details to eligible families over the coming week.

### **Cancellation of School Trips Abroad**

I have personally been dealing with this issue. I am currently working with the Academy's own insurer, Zurich Municipal, to seek refunds for all parents/carers for the cancelled trips to the Opal Coast and to Serre Chevalier (ski trip). As you can imagine insurance companies are currently awash with claims from disappointed customers who have had their holidays cancelled through no fault of their own. Both our claims have been passed onto the COVID-19 claims handling team and I remain in regular contact with Zurich. When I have more information, I will inform you via secondary contact and will update the website with further details. As a parent who is waiting for a refund for my own daughter's trip abroad, I fully understand the frustration you may be feeling during this process. However please be assured that we are doing all that we can in relation to this matter.

### **Year 11 Leavers' Ball**

It is with much sadness that the planned leavers' ball booked at Beamish Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> June has been postponed as Beamish Hall has taken the decision to close their doors until further notice. We **WILL** have this ball and as soon as we are able to rebook, I will be in touch with a selection of dates so we can celebrate the wonderful class of 2020!

**Finally** – thank you all once again. I have been moved by the way that students, parents and staff have come together to support one another during this difficult time. I, along with all of our school community, continue to feel indebted to the NHS and Key workers for all their work to help fight this pandemic. I know that we still have difficult times ahead and we are here to support you and your families. Please take care of yourselves, families and neighbours and stay safe and well

Yours faithfully



**J E Crowe**  
**Principal**