



Herne Bay High School

Specialist Sports College

Bullockstone Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7NS
☎ 01227 361221 ✉ principal@hernebayhigh.org



6th January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this at the start of term with a national lockdown in place and schools identified as closed. This is not the schooling experience that I wish for our community and I share your frustration. Having said that we, as a resilient bunch and working together we can get through it again and continue to ensure your sons and daughters are educated, cared for and safe. Ironically, this term's focus is perseverance, something we will all need to demonstrate.

I do want to recognise, in this difficult time, the importance that you as parents and carers have in ensuring students continue to remain positive and focussed. I have already received numerous communications from you saying how positive, supportive and engaging the teachers and lessons have been so far and how this brings a welcome relief to the "lockdown stay at home" situation we all find ourselves in. So please, encourage your children to get online, log into the lessons and work hard.

Contrary to much media reporting about schools being closed, Herne Bay High School is open and will be delivering an education to all students using the fabulous HBHS online learning system. From Tuesday 4th January students have started receiving:

- Morning mentor time or an assembly – led by their mentor or year team lead
- Normal timetabled lessons - 6 sessions per day as per their timetable (5 on Wednesday)
- MOST lessons being taught LIVE by their teacher
- An afternoon mentor session

We shall be continually checking online attendance as well as engagement in learning, following up with phone calls home if we are concerned. We will also be supplying parents with a Red / Amber / Green engagement report before ½ term and this will convey the teacher's perception of how well your son / daughter has engaged in their work.

Many of you tuned into my assembly on January 5th, where wonderfully we had over 1300 attendees. In this assembly, I shared a number of updates that are important, but just 48 hours later some of that has changed and greater clarity is now available on others.

Year 10 to 13 External Vocational January exams: Following further updates from the DfE late last night, I have today written to all students taking vocational exams setting out how the school will be supporting the safe running of all exams for year 11 to 13 but unfortunately cancelling year 10 exams.

Summer Exams (A level & GCSE): Today, Gavin Williamson confirmed in the House of Commons that summer exams at both GCSE and A Level have now been officially cancelled. He has explained that schools will be providing information to the examining boards later in the year that will enable centre assessed teacher grades to be used rather than exam grades. In school assessment will be



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part of this process and it is therefore critical that **all students who were planning to sit exams continue with all mock exams and remain fully engaged in their lessons as everything they do will be used as part of the grade calculation process.**

Year 13 Mock Exams: Year 13 mock exams will continue as planned with students sitting these in exam conditions at home. I know how much time and effort our students have been put into preparing for these and students need the opportunity to show what they are capable of. Mrs Wrigley, Head of 6th form, will write today with greater detail on mock exams.

Year 11 Mock Exams: These were due to be taken in the week of the 1st February. Year 11 mocks will still go ahead. If we are back just after ½ term they will be taken then, if not they may well be undertaken remotely.

Return to School: Whilst this has not been set, the Secretary of State did say today that he hopes students will start to return to school after the February ½ term. This may be an ambitious target as Boris Johnson stated he would not release any lockdown until over 13 million vaccinations have been completed. I hope that we can, at least, welcome back exam Years 11 & 13 by the 22nd February. What has been stated is that students are likely to have undertaken asymptomatic testing with a lateral flow test before return to school.

Mass asymptomatic testing of students: We have setup a full testing system with all the equipment ready to start mass lateral flow testing of students as and when they return to school. We shall be writing shortly to ask for consent to undertake these tests which are designed to reduce risk, keep students safe and minimise time lost in school due to isolation. This has been no mean feat and I am proud of the hard work and planning that has gone into getting this ready.

Vulnerable students and children of keyworkers: As has always been the case, an on-site provision is available for identified students as defined by the Government criteria. If your situation changes please contact the school at principal@hernebayhigh.org

I hope this starts to give you a sense of the enormity of the challenges we face and the changes that we are going through. I do know that I have the most fantastic, dedicated staffing body who will always go above and beyond to help us all get through it safely, whilst not compromising the quality of education.

I will, as always, continue to write and keep you posted on changes and any updates over the coming weeks. Please take care and stay safe.

Kind regards

Mr J Boyes
Principal