

CLAVERHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Principal: Mr P. Swatton, B.Eng (Hons)

Date: 29th January 2021

Ref: PAS

Dear Parents and Carers,

Update - 29th January 2021

I hope that you and your family are well.

Wider Reopening of Schools

I know that many of us were disappointed by the news earlier this week, that students are unlikely to return to school more widely until at least the 8th March. However, I am sure that we would all agree that we need to ensure that infection levels have reduced significantly, and allow the vaccination programme to take a fuller effect, before schools can open up more widely. We appreciate the additional pressure that remote learning brings to many households. We recognise, and share in, the frustration that many young people and families will feel at this time but, it continues to be important that we support each other so that we can collaboratively navigate the next few weeks, until our students can return safely to school. Please remember that our staff are here to help and that there is a wealth of information, support and useful strategies available on the College website.

COVID-19 Testing

We are continuing with our programme of testing of asymptomatic students and members of staff who are on the College site. As you will see from my additional letter today we have, unfortunately, had our first positive case identified by this process. Thankfully the student concerned is generally well and we hope that they make a swift recovery.

This testing programme in-school is only for people with no symptoms of COVID-19. If students or members of staff develop symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Thank you to all members of the College community who have volunteered to help with the testing programme, we are extremely grateful for your offers of assistance. Due to the small numbers of students and staff onsite currently we have been able to manage to carry out the testing programme using our staff team. We are currently formulating plans for the

wider opening of the College, when the Government indicates that this is possible, and we will be in touch with all those who have volunteered, in due course, to inform them of our next steps.

Exam Consultation

As you will be aware the consultation into the awarding of grades to students this summer ends tonight at 11.45pm. Whilst Ofqual's consultation seems to set out some broadly sensible options for assessing this summer's GCSEs and A-levels, following the cancellation of exams, there are a number of outstanding issues about which we have fed back via the consultation process.

There are a number of important questions to be resolved, particularly around exactly how any externally-set papers taken in the summer term will provide fairness and consistency. Students' learning has been disrupted by the pandemic to greatly varying extents depending on the area they live in, the school they go to or individual issues. These papers will need to be exceptionally well designed, and this will be a huge challenge given that time is short and nothing like this has been attempted before. The marking of papers also seems to be an issue, especially around who marks them and then how this is moderated.

I am pleased to see that the proposals appear to avoid the issues of last summer by getting rid of the proposal of standardising grades by using an algorithm. However, this will mean that the support and guidance provided to schools and colleges, and the quality assurance processes, will need to be clear and logical in order to ensure that there is consistency in how grades are awarded. There will also need to be a clear appeal process for students should they not agree with the grades awarded. I think we would all also want to avoid some of the inflation of grades we saw last year that could potentially lead to the devaluing of individual students' grades.

In summary all of this adds up to a huge and complex task for the exam boards and schools, I think our additional concern would be that, as with a number of things recently, this seems to have been left rather late. It appears that the results from the consultation won't be known until the end of February at the earliest.

Please be assured that we are continuing to collect data in the interim so that we have the evidence needed to ensure that our students get the grades they deserve. That is why our overriding message to Year 11 students has been, and continues to be, keep working and keep engaging with the lessons and other materials provided by members of staff.

Laptop Donations

We are continuing to support students with their technological needs. If you find yourself in a position where, for whatever reason, your child does not have access to a device to work on please click [here](#) to email and let us know.

Whilst we have been given some laptops via the government scheme which we have handed out to over 100 students and families so far, there are still a significant number of

students who do not have access to their own devices which are suitable for work. We are doing all we can to support these students but would appreciate some support from our wonderful community. We have received a number of donated laptops, which is a wonderful gesture, but unfortunately, we have not been able to pass all of these on to students due to their age and some of the operating systems not being able to cope with remote learning. If you wish to donate a laptop, or other electronic device, please contact us by clicking [here](#) so that we can discuss this with you.

However, if you are in a position to help financially, we are looking at purchasing new chromebooks for students who do not have them. If you are in this position and are willing to support us please donate via your ParentPay account. You can donate anywhere between £5 and £20 and we are grateful for any donation you are able to offer.

Thank you in advance for any help you can provide at this difficult time for the whole community.

Year 9 Options

As Year 9 parents will be aware, we have put in place measures to ensure that students, parents and carers are supported through the options process as we move through the next few weeks. This process will include a range of sources of information including an online parent consultation event and access to a dedicated options website featuring prerecorded videos made by heads of subject. Further information will be distributed to parents, carers and students on Monday 1st February from 5pm.

February Half Term

As you may have seen reported in the news, schools will be closed over the week of the scheduled February half term in order to give students and members of staff a much-deserved break from their hard work over the course of this term. Remote learning and our provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable students, in school, will resume on Monday 22nd February.

Geography Caption Competition

Our Geography Caption Competition returns this week, by popular demand. In order to enter you just need to think of a suitable caption for the week's geographically themed picture. The winners will be announced at the end of each week.

Please use the link below to enter the competition for Monday 1st - Friday 5th February.

<https://forms.gle/dwgrQ2cxYheG3JVs7>

First News newspaper online

In order to help our students to keep up to date with current affairs we subscribe to First News. This is a weekly newspaper aimed at 7 to 14-year-olds that aims to get kids talking about the news in an easy to understand and non-threatening way. First News covers issues which are relevant to children and which specifically affect them.

You can view this week's online edition of First News [here](#).

Simply enter the First News Education ID: **FNELOCK3**

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your child's pastoral team, in the first instance. Details can be found on the 'Contacts' page of our website.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Swatton
Principal