

**6 April 2020**

Dear parents and carers,

We are ending this term in a very different world than the one in which we began. It has been over two weeks since the government ordered that schools close and we have all now become accustomed to our new reality as a school.

I understand how hard it has been for everybody during this time, both personally and professionally. Many parents and carers are now having to look after students whilst having to juggle the stresses of working from home, and in many cases, also having to support other family members who are unable to leave their homes.

I'd like to start by thanking all parents and carers for their patience and understanding during the last couple of weeks. Teachers and other school staff have been on an immense learning curve, from being trained to work face-to-face with students, to having to work remotely via distance learning activities. I understand from parent feedback that many parents and young people have struggled with this new approach and the school is working to resolve this as soon as possible to ensure that young people and their parents/carers can learn effectively.

As parents and carers will know, the school site has remained open, with the children of keyworkers being offered supervision during term time as well as during the holidays. While the majority of teaching staff who are not on-site have been busy at home setting and assessing student work, our on-site provision have been warmly welcomed by parents and carers working in the frontline professions, and the school staff are more than happy to support our keyworkers in any way that we can.

On Friday, the NHS contacted the school and asked if we could donate any goggles and visors to be used by frontline NHS staff in their brave work to tackle the pandemic. As a result, students and staff on-site spent Friday collecting as many goggles and visors as they could. In the end, we delivered around 300 pairs to Berrywood Hospital to be distributed across the local NHS.

Further to Friday's announcement from Ofqual, giving further details on how the grading systems for GCSE and A Level will work this year, Mr Wakefield and the assessment team are now considering the process we need to put into place to ensure we achieve the best possible grades for our Year 11 and Year 13 students. We will be reporting this back to parents once we have finalised the approach the school will take.

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I would also like to take the opportunity to reassure you that I do completely understand the challenges you're facing as families, whether they be financial, looking after children while working from home or possibly health-related.

As a strong community, we will get through these testing times together and I look forward to the day when I am able to welcome our students back to school as normal. In the meantime, please stay safe and stay well.

Regards,



David James  
Principal