



WALTON HIGH

Leading Learning

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Executive Principal: Michelle Currie
Principal: Sharon Alexander

Chair of Governors: Renu Elston
Business Manager: Sukh Singh

3 April 2020

Dear Parents

Covid-19: Update 10

This week has run very smoothly with students being able to access Firefly without any problems and work delivered to the homes of all students without internet access. I hope families are adjusting to the new normal and have routines in place to give young people the structure they need at this challenging time.

GCSE, A Level and Vocational qualifications

The body responsible for qualifications in England, Ofqual, has today announced the arrangements for awarding this year's qualifications. Information for parents can be found using the link belowⁱ. A letter has also been written to students explaining the arrangementsⁱⁱ.

I can reassure parents that Walton High will ensure that our students receive the grades they deserve in all the qualifications they have been working so hard for over the past two or three years.

Free School Meals

The Government has also recently announced the arrangements for students entitled to Free School Meals. For Walton High students there will be no change as the Government's scheme enables us to continue to issue a weekly £15 Tesco voucher.

The COVID-19 Update 7 letter gave advice to parents on how to apply for Free School Meals for their child(ren) if they think they may now be entitled to this support.ⁱⁱⁱ

Student engagement

It is very pleasing to see the level of engagement from students across the school with the learning activities set by their teachers. This would not be the case without the support of their parents and we thank you for the encouragement you are giving your children. Working together we will be able to ensure the disruption to students' learning does not have a negative impact on their progress.

Student to teacher and student to student communication via MS Teams illustrates the pleasing level of engagement. Up until the 1 April, there had been:

1:1 calls:	2,532
Channel messages:	35,001
Chat messages:	141,333
Unique users:	1,903
Unique devices:	2,061

It is doubtful that all the messages were work related! However, students have by and large engaged very well with their online learning and used the facility to communicate with others in a mature and responsible manner.

Unfortunately, we have received reports that a very small number of students have not behaved in line with the school's Code of Conduct. It is not possible for us to monitor all online conversations so we urge parents to check from time to time that their children are using IT appropriately. Any concerns about inappropriate online behaviour should be sent to bl-pastoral@mket.org.uk or wt-pastoral@mket.org.uk as appropriate.

On a positive note, Ms Alexander will continue to write to students regularly and encourage them to share their home learning and response to the Head of Year challenges on the dedicated web page (<https://waltonhigh.org.uk/waltonhighathome>).

Digital divide

The removal of data use restrictions on broadband packages has alleviated the concerns some families shared about the possible financial consequences of students working from home and the school has continued to investigate ways in which we can support students without any access to a PC/tablet or broadband.

After the holiday, we will be trialling the use of 4G mini-hubs and reconfigured PCs removed from IT rooms to help address the digital divide. If successful, and once we have met the needs of students without any access to a PC/tablet, we will investigate to what extent we can support families who have more than one child attending Walton High and only have one shared device. In order to establish the possible level of demand, if this is something your family would be interested in, please email feedback@mket.org.uk.

IT Support

In an earlier update, I advised parents that we were investigating whether it was possible for MKET's Technical Services Team to provide remote support for students experiencing IT problems. I am pleased to advise that this may now be possible for some devices but will depend on the operating system. Students should request IT support by emailing itsupport@mket.org.uk from their school email address. The email should give a brief explanation of the issue and, where possible, screen shots to illustrate the problem.

For security reasons, students should only allow MKET's IT Support access to their PC – the Technical Services Team will always ask for consent before accessing remotely.

Teacher recruitment

As a growing school, Walton High usually spends much of the spring term recruiting additional teachers for September. Whilst we are nearly fully staffed, we were hoping to make a few more appointments but the school's closure has seriously curtailed our recruitment activities. To ensure we have a full complement of teachers for September, we will need to amend our recruitment practice as candidates will not be able to deliver a demonstration lesson and interviews will have to take place by video call. However, our aim is to continue to recruit the best teachers available.

Easter holiday arrangements reminder

Walton High will continue to provide childcare for the children of critical workers throughout the Easter break. This will be supervised by me and Ms Alexander.

Teachers will be on holiday between 6 – 17 April. During this time, teachers will not be setting students work or responding to emails etc. Lessons will begin again on 20 April.

Stay at home and help save lives

We continue to urge everyone to have consideration for the wellbeing of others, and support those working in the NHS, by abiding by the “stay at home” rule.

Stay in, keep your distance, wash your hands, don't touch your face and look after each other!

Best wishes



Michelle Currie
Executive Principal

i https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877842/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents.pdf

ii https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877830/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

iii https://www.waltonhigh.org.uk/images/letters/COVID-19_update_2020_03_23.pdf