



20 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families have had a restful Easter break and that you have managed to stay safe and well.

I am writing to welcome you, for the first time in history, to a virtual start to the Summer term. We have all had to adapt to some significantly new ways of working, have had to increase flexibility and cope with a variety of demands on our time and resources. I know that some of you will be anxious about income and job security, as well as health and welfare, and I hope that we can support you where necessary. We have been providing shopping vouchers to those usually in receipt of free school meals since closure and have been checking on the welfare of our most vulnerable students and families. We continue to work with local organisations to support those who need it, as well as opening our school to cater for the most vulnerable and the children of key workers. We were prepared to open over the Easter holiday, and had around 70 staff volunteers prepared to staff the school, including over the bank holidays. On this occasion our services were not required but I was humbled by such an emphatic response to my request for help from our incredible staff body.

It has been a strange and challenging time, so it's understandable if you and your child feel anxious and frustrated. We continue to work hard to plan for the coming weeks and months. We've been considering the curriculum for students, our Year 10 students and how they will be affected next year, transition from primary school and to college, mental health and wellbeing, the eventual return to school and the shape and structure of this and much more.

We miss having the pupils in school, but we must continue to follow the government's guidance to keep everyone in our community safe. We continue to set work using Microsoft Teams and thank you for your support in helping your children complete this work.

Some of you have asked about virtual lessons. We have been strongly advised not to offer virtual lessons due a wide range of issues including but not limited to potential safeguarding concerns, technology access, staff proficiency in creating resources, staff availability, student availability at fixed times and health considerations. We are, however, investigating other forms of delivering the curriculum. These may include pre-recorded narrated PowerPoint presentations and whiteboard explanations. We have also recently received information about GCSE Bitesize's hugely increased provision and details of the new Oak National Academy resource. We are in the process of investigating these options and will determine how these resources can be incorporated into our curriculum delivery. Please feel free to have a preliminary look at these resources by Googling the resource name.

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Our teachers will continue to set work for pupils to get complete over the summer term. Do also remind your child to take breaks away from screens and make time for having fun, connecting with friends and family and exercising. Mental health is just as important as physical health and academic study. Please remember that it is not possible to produce 6 hours of content per day for every child. Children complete work at different rates and the impact of working alone, where children are understanding concepts, is that they go through topics much quicker than in class where teacher explanation, practical work and class discussion take up significant time whilst helping children to learn. Schools, teachers and parents are not able to replicate a full school curriculum provision in the current environment. We are all doing our best to provide all that we can in the circumstances.

If you have any urgent concerns in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact your child's tutor or year leader. Or, for safeguarding concerns, please do not hesitate to contact staysafe@testbourne.school or use the emergency safeguarding phone number 07436 530 997. Please note that we have now collated all of our COVID-19 related information on our website. You can view it all by visiting <https://www.testbourne.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=COVID%2D19+Information&pid=1150>.

Kind regards,

Mr J Beck
Headteacher

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