

Dear parents/carers

Over the past two weeks we have had to adjust to a new reality. Children, staff and indeed yourselves as parents, are altering and adopting new ways of working. We know the sacrifices everyone is having to make at the moment and the challenges we are facing daily as we adjust to new routines and expectations. Together and in partnership we hope to support you and your child with their education during this period of social distancing.

Your child's Head of Year, Mentor or a member of the academy team will have already been in touch to reassure and support your child. They will continue to do this on a regular basis.

Our school has been closed to the vast majority of students and we have been providing a skeleton staff for the emergency opening for children of critical key workers only. We would like to thank parents who are critical key workers but have been able to organise alternative arrangements for their children rather than sending them to school.

Whilst we do not want to overwhelm you with too much information there are a number of key messages in this email, so please do take the time to read it thoroughly. Going forward we hope to email you every week to keep you updated with developments, although some parents of children in specific year groups may also get some further correspondence as appropriate.

Developing Good Routines

Perhaps one of the most important things you can be doing at the moment is helping your child to slip into a routine of home working. A routine is essential (especially getting up at a reasonable time!) and then students will need to develop good habits. One of the most difficult but important things you can do is to ensure that they do not work alongside their mobile phones. This is the biggest distraction for our young people and it is really important that they create an environment which will support their study – away from distractions! Alongside this you should prioritise good sleeping habits for your children. There is an understandable danger of slipping into late nights and lengthy lie-ins. Such habits will be difficult to break once we return to normal.

Our advice would be to spend time really focusing on developing good routines and study habits. After Easter our children will have had their Easter break and should be returning to the expectation of "learning at home". This would be an ideal time to develop some really good habits and routines if they have not already done so. This will provide your child with a structured day to help maintain stability during this unsettled period.

We know that some families have a number of school age children as well as adults working from home, and where competition for the use of computers means that online lessons are not always a viable solution. We are doing our best to provide support for all our students in the current ever changing situation.

Study Program

School staff have been putting together a comprehensive program of study for students to engage with, all of which can be access on the Academy website. Staff have also put together a collection of work which can be completed with limited internet access. These resources are consistently being updated, and students should be accessing them daily. Where possible, students should be following their academy timetable.

As the next two weeks would be the Easter break, we are encouraging the students to undertake the type of work that would be set over a holiday period. These include reading, learning new skills, picking up an old musical instrument, researching a topic they are interested in. Whilst students are free to continue with their Knowledge Organiser work and work already set online, school staff will not be setting any addition work over the next two weeks. The resources will be updated on April 20th with a bank of new resources.

Internet Safety

We know that parents and carers are having to manage their child's use of technology and help them learn remotely. This can feel overwhelming, but we are here to help. There are lots of

useful resources and tools that you as a parent or carer can use to help ensure your child is safe and happy online.

[Online safety activities you can do from home](#)

As young people spend more time at home and are going to be online more than ever, we've pulled together a list of easy-to-use resources. They are broken up into ages and include quick activities, films and plenty more fun ways to engage your children. From identifying fake news to online bullying – there is plenty for you to use and adapt for your family.

- [For 11-14 year olds](#)
- [For 14-18 year olds](#)

[Find out more about the online safety activities you can do from home.](#)

Getting advice and guidance if something goes wrong

While spending so much time online there is also an increase in the chances they will see something online which isn't intended for them. Whether this is fake news and impersonation, or mean comments, there are lots of places you can go for help and advice on how to report this behaviour.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuseSupport for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:
 - [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
 - [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
 - [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Student Wellbeing

Over the past few weeks you may have struggled to keep to the routines you had hoped to implement at the start of remote schooling. You may even have ended up arguing with your child over the lack of work they have been completing during the course of the day or struggled to get them to put down their phone, get off the gaming station or stop watching endless amounts of YouTube clips. Right now, our children are just as scared and anxious as us. Their "normal" has been pulled from underneath them and they will be struggling like us to process the enormity of what is happening. Every single child in the country is in the same place right now.

Ultimately, we must make sure that our children have the support, care and reassurance from us all to get them through these unprecedented times.

If you feel your child is not coping with their anxieties and would benefit from some extra wellbeing support while trying to make sense of the uncertainty around us. Please email wellbeing@tbowa.org where one of our wellbeing team will contact your child for support.

However, if you or they feel they need to talk to professionals please make use of the some of the following links to external charities and

organisations:

Mental Health Foundation, Kooth, Young Minds, Chat Health, Child Line.

For guidance from Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust click [HERE](#).

For further guidance from the Government, click [HERE](#).

Safeguarding

For information about safeguarding during school closure click

<https://www.tbowa.org/attachments/download.asp?file=1256&type=pdf>.

GCSE and A Level Grades

As has been reported in the news, there are more details being published regarding how the GCSE and A Level grades will be allocated this year. We would like to reassure our students that we recognise that this is a troubling time for them, and we will do all we can to ensure they are awarded the grades that they deserve. Students may have completed past papers (mock or homework), coursework or exercise books at home. We would like to ask that students store these examples of their work should the need arise. As we do not know the full details of how the grades will be awarded, keeping these safe will help in the event that we are asked for evidence of student work.

Staying safe in the Community

In order to minimise the number of people in close proximity to each other we urge you to ensure that your child remains at home, avoiding all non-essential social contact to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus. This will enable us to keep our whole community as safe as possible.

- [Poster from Dorset Police](#)
- [Coronavirus: Public Information](#)
- [NHS Poster](#)
- [HM Government & NHS](#)
- Further information can be found on the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Contacting the Academy

During the closure period the office email address can be used to contact the school for urgent queries but please do not use this for day to day contact with teachers. This address will be monitored by staff from the academy regularly and queries will be directed to the appropriate member of staff.

Please be aware that our reception is closed to visitors, the phone lines are closed and there are fewer administrative staff on-site so response times may be slower at present. We will ensure that notices regarding closure are posted on the academy website and remain up to date to keep you informed of any changes in line with the government's advice.

We will write to parents each week with an update about how the academy and families can work in partnership to support your child. If you have any concerns please contact us.

Next week sees us progress towards the highlight of the Church calendar with Holy Week and celebration of Easter. In these difficult times you might find a moment for prayer. Students are given the opportunity to pray at the academy regularly. I know many students value these moments of quiet reflection and contemplation. Now might be a good time for families to come together and share some time for quiet reflection and prayer.

We wish you all good health.

Best wishes,
Paul Mc