

Our Ref: PRC/EMH

05 February 2021

Dear Parent/Students,

Despite being in Lockdown, time still seems very precious with balancing work and family commitments, staying in touch with friends and having some time for yourself. Therefore, I'll try and be as brief as possible with the updates.

Year 9

We hope you are enjoying the live lesson element of our remote learning offer. We know that this will further support your learning and social interaction, whilst not overloading you with too much screen time so you have the flexibility to complete and submit work in your own time.

I am delighted to hear from Mr Snowdon that students are doing their research and asking some really sensible questions of the Key Stage 4 Options process. Everything you need is on the Frog site and forms are due in on 1st March.

Year 11 and Year 13

We await the outcome of the consultation on the Awarding of Grades which I shared with you in my last update. The report and recommendations are likely to be released immediately after half term. As I have stated previously, the advice to our students right now is to remain fully committed to your studies as this will pay dividends when assessments do take place and grades are submitted to exam boards.

February half term break-Monday 15th February – Friday 19th February

One of the main announcements last week was confirmation that schools will close for February half term as we would normally. This means that school will not be open to accommodate any vulnerable students or children of critical workers. I am pleased that this decision has been made so staff and students can have a very well deserved break.

Those students eligible for Free School meals will be supported through vouchers over half term.

Return to school

The Prime Minister announced that schools will not return after February half term but that we hope it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools from Monday 8th March. Staff are all eager to get back as soon as it is safe to do so. Again, we await guidance of what this re-

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opening will look like-I have learned that there is no point speculating too much until this is released.

Sixth Form Progression Appointments: Year 11 Students

Mrs Blackburn and the Sixth Form team had hoped to arrange face to face progression appointments with all of our Year 11 students. However, as schools won't be reopening immediately after half term, we have decided to do these one-to-one appointments remotely instead, via Teams. The appointments will start in the week beginning Monday 22nd February. Your child should be familiar with Teams, as this will have been used for some live lessons by now. The progression appointment will be arranged with a member of the Sixth Form team and a letter outlining the date and time for the appointment will be sent to your child before half term. Parents are welcome to sit in on the appointment if they wish.

The appointment is very important for all Year 11 students, as its purpose is to help them plan their next step after Year 11, and therefore it is vital that your child attends at the correct time, whether the intention is to stay in Sixth Form or go elsewhere.

In advance of the appointment, we ask that your child looks again at our prospectus, which you can find in the Sixth Form section of our website. If the intention is to stay in the Sixth Form at Gosforth Academy, they need to be ready for the appointment with a choice of five courses that they would like to try out on the Bridging Course, which we hope to run during the week beginning 12th July. This will enable them to get to know more about each subject and how the Sixth Form runs, in order to make a well-informed final choice of typically three courses when we enrol at the end of August.

If your child's intention is to progress elsewhere after Year 11, we can help to support with this and can give advice.

The same acceptable use policy applies to these Teams appointments as to Teams lessons. Please ensure that your child is familiar with this and that the camera turned off and the appointment takes place in a quiet environment. Unlike Teams lessons, however, if parents or carers wish to attend this appointment by sitting in, they may do so.

Please bear in mind that the tutors will be on a tight schedule for these appointments. If your child needs additional or very specific advice and support, we may need to set up an additional meeting for you with our Progression Manager, Mrs Vincent.

Sixth Form welfare checks

Parents of our current Sixth Form students should note that during the week beginning 22nd February, our Sixth Form tutors won't be able to carry their usual welfare calls. If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing in that time, however, please call their tutor and leave a message.

Finally.....

Our message to all students continues to be to follow their normal school timetable, including stopping at 2:40pm or 3:30pm each day. Some of you are working too hard, some of you are not working hard enough, some of you hate live lessons, some of you want more, some of you need flexibility, others need rigour. There is no gold standard remote education offer which will get universal favour across 1900+ students. However, the independent skills you are all

developing due to the situation we find ourselves in will stand you in great stead for Higher Education or Sixth Form. For the majority of students who have worked tirelessly over the last six weeks, please have a break at half term.

Thanks to all parents for their continued support. Unless there is something urgent next week I will be back in touch with updates on Friday 26th February.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Preit Chahal', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Preit Chahal
Principal