



1st May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to my weekly update. As always, I hope this letter finds you all well?

Next week, for some, marks the 7th week since working from home began. In some respects it seems to have passed quite quickly and in others time seems to have stood still! As I write this letter, having just watched the news, there are still many contradicting views, opinions and theories as to when lockdown may be lifted and schools resume "normal service". There is still, no concrete decision that has been made so in the meantime, we continue with the current provision.

I do not want to make any knee jerk changes to how we are currently operating as I feel that students, in general, have got to grips with this way of working and how work will be accessed. I am awaiting the next set of guidance which should be received towards the end of this next lockdown period before deciding on what the next steps may look like.

With regard to "normal service" and all students returning to school at the same time, I feel that this is still a long way off and that the approach we take in the long term will be a very different one. I again though, do not want to speculate on what this could look like. I do, however, want to give you my assurances that we are modelling a range of different situations so that we are prepared to respond quickly when the situation does change.

Can I say a big well done to students for adapting to this way of working? I appreciate how hard it can be. It can be helpful for students to plan out the structure of the day to make sure that appropriate breaks and downtime is built in and that work is spread through the day. This last week has been spent developing the website to provide specific information advice and guidance to year groups to help support home study. Achievement leads will regularly update the "year group" pages with specific information. Over the coming days, this is where planning templates and guidance on how "teams" calendars can help with planning days and weeks will be added. My advice is little and often.

It is at this time of year where the leadership team, traditionally start to plan for September. This tradition continues and we have begun our conversations around this. We are reviewing the timetable and curriculum on offer for September to ensure that we give enough time, breadth and depth for each subject to ensure that we can reduce gaps in learning and enhance progress, even given the circumstances we face.

Although I cannot give any concrete information at this stage, for current Year 10 and Year 12 students, I am undertaking a root and branch review of their provision to ensure that we can best set students up with access to lessons, specialist teachers, support and intervention for them in readiness for their GCSE / A Level preparations next year. For these year groups, it may mean that the timings of the school day and provision they receive may be slightly different. I will provide further details on this as it develops, but I want to ensure that we have left no stone unturned.

For those families entitled to free school meals, I hope that you have been receiving the food vouchers provided through the government portal? We have tried to ensure the smooth transition from our own provision to the government provision to ensure maximum efficiency. As I know some families within our school community have been affected by the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. The school web page includes updated guidance on eligibility and how to apply Free School Meals to help during these times. This is a relatively quick process which only requires you to have an email address and your National Insurance number to hand. Please visit www.garibaldischool.co.uk/page.php?p=fsm for further information.

For current Year 11 and Year 13 students, I hope that students continue to plan for their next steps. Further work and guidance will be updated regularly on the school website to support students with this. For those intending to stay at Garibaldi in the Sixth Form, I know Mr Brennan has been in touch to try and finalise option blocks. The intention is that once we know students' final choices, we can provide specific subject based information to begin work on their Post 16 courses in readiness. I would encourage students to return this information to Mr Brennan as soon as possible.

As always, students are more than welcome to email their mentors / teachers if they need any help, support or further guidance. This offer is also open to parents to do the same thing.

Until next week, best wishes for now and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Aldred', written over a horizontal line.

Mr J Aldred
Head of School

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