

January 15th 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well and coping with the inevitable strain that being in lockdown brings. If you are struggling in any way and feel the school could help, please do get in contact with us and we will do our best to assist you.

### **Remote Learning and Digital Support Available**

The level of student engagement with remote learning has been superb, but some students' punctuality is not as good as it could be and this can be disruptive to the flow of the lesson, please can you remind your children that the lessons start at the same time as they do in school and they must be on time. I know how hard it is for parents to support with remote learning and I thank you for all you are doing.

If you are having, any issues with the remote learning please do get in contact and we will do what we can to help. We have distributed over 80 laptops so far and have a few remaining, please contact Mrs Parkes AVP [parkesl@weyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:parkesl@weyvalley-academy.co.uk) for further information.

The mobile phone companies and government are also providing free data upgrades for children and young people who need it to tether devices to the mobile data network to access remote learning. A Microsoft Online Form will be sent out to parents next week with further details as to who qualifies and how you can register for this additional data.

### **Reading During Lockdown**

Many of you might be interested in keeping your child engaged with reading over this lockdown period - if you would like a particular title or book to read, please contact our librarian Eileen Harding [hardinge@weyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:hardinge@weyvalley-academy.co.uk) and we can arrange for you to collect it.

Year 7 and year 8 students can continue with their Accelerated Reading quizzes at home or for some students they can continue with the online Reading Plus programme. You will have been sent a separate letter about this if your child is involved with Reading Plus.

Another website with lots of ideas is the National Literacy Trust website, which has a Virtual School Library. Use this link to look at what is on offer.

<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/virtual-school-library/>

If you have any questions about getting your child into reading contact, [hardinge@weyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:hardinge@weyvalley-academy.co.uk) or you can contact your child's English teacher.

### **Tutor Time on Monday**

At the end of the tutor time on Monday, we would like the students to turn their cameras on to enable them to see their friends. Obviously, the Tutor monitors this and we ask that all students are appropriately dressed and they use a backdrop or blur the screen background on Teams, if not they should ensure they have a suitable background. The Tutor can turn off any camera or microphone if required. Students **do not have to do this** if they do not want to. If you would prefer them not to turn their camera on, please email their Head of Year before tutor time on Monday (10am).

#### **Wey Valley Academy**

Sian Thomas, BEd (Hons), CEO - AAT

Jon Webb, BA (Hons), Director of Secondary Education

Rob Russell, BEd (Hons), Principal

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### **Free School Meals**

At the end of each week, we will send out Free School Meals vouchers. If you do not receive them, please contact [drivera@weyvalley-academy.co.uk](mailto:drivera@weyvalley-academy.co.uk) Students who are in school will have their FSM provided on site and so will not receive vouchers.

If there are any families who are struggling at this time due to the impact of Covid, furlough, or redundancies please contact, your child's Head of Year as we may be able to support you or at least help put you in contact with organisations who can. Dorset Council has set up a good support network to help families who are experiencing difficulties at this time.

### **Year 11 Parents' Evening**

I am sorry that the Parents' Evening did not go as planned. We use a third-party provider to host the online parents' evenings and unfortunately, their website crashed. I will rearrange the meetings as soon as possible and we will contact parents to notify them of the new arrangements. I hope to reschedule for **Thursday 4th February**, all being well.

**"SchoolCloud provides parents' evening software to over 5,000 schools, and experienced an outage on 14th January affecting the parents & teachers accessing video calls at that time. An update to the system in December caused a web page to perform slowly and this ultimately took the system offline. This was not up to the high standard of service that schools expect of us, nor that we expect of ourselves. We have already made changes, and continue to take further steps to ensure that you can continue to enjoy this new format of parents' evenings."**

### **Year 11 Examinations**

The national consultation has started and we hope to hear very soon, what the government is actually proposing to do for the children who were due to take their examinations this summer. I do not know what the outcome will be, although there is a lot of speculation across the media. What I do know is that it will be essential for schools to collect as much evidence of each student's present attainment and progress as possible, especially if we are asked to estimate grades for our students. This means it is **essential** that all Year 11 students engage fully with all their remote learning lessons and complete all the set assignments to a high standard.

The teachers will provide as many opportunities as possible for the students to demonstrate their ability.

The academy had an examination information evening scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup> but we will postpone this and hold it once we have some certainty about how the students will be assessed. We will keep you informed of any developments.

### **Year 9 Options Choices – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

The planned Year 9 Options Presentation Evening will still go ahead but online. During this we will explain the process of selecting GCSE and Vocational courses and provide you with access to information, both video and written about each of the courses on offer.

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**Year 9 Parents' Evening**

This will go ahead online using Schoolcloud on **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January**, as this will provide information that will assist you with making options choices.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I will endeavour to keep you all fully informed of any developments, if you have any concerns or questions please email your child's Head of Year or any of the Senior Leadership Team. All staff email addresses can be found on the school website.

Yours faithfully



Rob Russell - Principal

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