

3rd February 2021

Dear Parent(s) and Carer(s),

I hope that you and your family are all well. I am writing to update you on various issues related to the national lockdown and school closure.

Year 11 exams

As you will be aware, the final GCSE exams have been cancelled again this year. We understand how this situation will cause confusion, anxiety and added pressure to pupils and we will seek to support them to the best of our ability and in order to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by this situation.

We are awaiting the findings of the latest OFQUAL/government consultation on the best way to award grades to year 11 and the processes the school will need to carry out. However, it is clear that the school will be required to provide evidence such as mock exams or other work from pupils to justify the grades given by the school.

Therefore, we would like to remind year 11 pupils, as well as parents and carers, that they should all continue to study and work at home to the best of their ability. **The grades that they will be receiving in their academic reports this week are not their final grades** and they have opportunity to improve on these (and similarly if they stop working and learning they could even come down). We plan to hold further mock exams and school assessments for year 11 after the Easter holidays so we can get a more up to date assessment of their learning. It is, therefore, essential that year 11 pupils continue to study and revise both at home and when they return to school.

Careers education and college applications

Careers advice and guidance is continuing through our Yardleys Careers Information page on the VLE. On this page you will find regularly updated advice on a wide variety of areas such as local colleges, careers and application forms. Students can contact the careers team via this page using the forum called 'Post 16 College and Careers Queries'. Year 11 students that were not able to receive a careers interview whilst the school was open have been contacted via the VLE, to ensure these interviews are completed promptly they will be conducted virtually via Teams or phone calls.

Remote learning

The school continues to provide a full timetable of lessons and homework to pupils including form time and pastoral support. Please note that this provision includes a variety of methods to teach and support pupils including recorded lessons, live sessions and online work. Our provision is in line with OFSTED's expectations who advocate such a blended approach where *"live lessons have a lot of advantages"* but that they *"are not always more effective than other approaches"*.

It is also important that pupils complete all their set homework on FrogPlay and IXL every week as usual. Please note that there is a half term break coming up from Monday 15th – Friday 19th February and remote learning will resume after the break from Monday 22nd February onwards.

School re-opening

Obviously, like you, we are listening carefully to the latest government announcements regarding education and the re-opening of schools at some point in the future. **Please note that the government has stated 8th March is only the earliest date for any pupils returning to school, not an actual date of return.** The government will be reviewing closely the current rates of infection both nationally and locally. When a date for re-opening school is announced we will, as usual, review our systems and procedures carefully and communicate arrangements to you in order to keep everyone as safe as possible.

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Academic report

Your child's academic report, based on the exams they sat in December, will be made available this week on the VLE.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school via email enquiry@yardleys.bham.sch.uk regarding these or any other issues.

Headteacher

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that, in order to be closer to my family in Shropshire, I will be leaving my post as Headteacher of Yardleys School at the end of this academic year (at the end of August 2021) having started here 12 years ago as deputy headteacher. For the last 6 years I have thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of leading the school and working with so many lovely and talented children and adults. I would also like to thank you as parents and carers for your ongoing support for the school during my time here. The school governors are beginning the process of recruiting a new headteacher for September and, in doing so, I am confident that the school will continue to thrive, both in terms of academic standards and the unique Yardleys ethos, which makes this such a special place.

Yours sincerely



BRYNLEY EVANS
Headteacher