



SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Engaging minds, broadening horizons

Seaham High School
Station Road
Seaham
Co. Durham
SR7 0BH

01915161600

Head Teacher: Mr G.W Lumsdon

Deputy Head: Mrs A Carr
Deputy Head: Mr J.E Henderson

22.4.2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Although we are now in week 5 of the lockdown it is actually only our twelfth day with the school being closed. I am delighted with the response from students, parents and staff in trying to maintain some form of education in these difficult times. Students have completed many thousands of hours of work and are engaging in ways we never would have anticipated prior to this. Speaking to a high number of parents over the last few weeks it is clear the levels of support being provided by parents is invaluable and the effort being put in by students is fantastic.

I know for parents this isn't easy, especially for those who are trying to work from home. I've sat this morning watching a clip from Hegarty Maths about multiplying fractions to try and help my son in Year 8. I've also tried to help my daughter in Year 9 analyse a poem by William Blake and helped my youngest in Year 4 with prefixes and suffixes. I know it isn't always easy when those of us from an older generation were taught in different ways to how students are taught now. All I can advise is that you support them the best that you can and encourage them that as with anything in life you get out what you put in. It is easy to give up when things get hard but the important thing is to keep trying and if they need help that you can't provide get them to contact their teacher to ask for help. The teachers are busy setting work and should be providing feedback when work is handed in but they will respond to emails to try and help support students.

In terms of an update we have now refunded almost all of those who have paid for Disney, Kingsway and the Manchester/Blackpool visit. With regards to the Malaga visit there is little information I can yet give. We have contacted the Travel Company and at the moment they are waiting for guidance from the Foreign Office. However, it seems that if the Foreign Office advises against travel then the Airlines and Travel Company might require us to go later in the year or even rebook for next year. I will update those parents concerned as and when I get further information. I know this will be frustrating for parents but there is little more we can do as a school at the moment.

As promised as soon as we had information about the Free School Meal voucher scheme we have completed a fairly substantial amount of work to get everyone signed up as quickly and as best we can. This was further compounded when the Government suddenly announced this was to include payments for Easter. The inevitable consequence of this was that our Catering company Creative, which does such fantastic work providing meals all year round had to furlough the remaining staff they were maintaining in school. This means we are unable to provide food for the children of key workers who are still attending school. **Something else to be aware of is that if your personal circumstances have changed since the beginning of this situation your child may now be eligible for Free School Meals. If you think that could be the case then please contact us and we can advise you as to whether this is the case.**



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Staff have now received guidance around Year 11 examination grades and how to begin collating information for the exam boards. We have begun that process. No member of staff is doing it in isolation and we are hosting conference calls across Faculties and Departments to ensure that all staff approach this in the consistent way that the Government is advising us to. Mr Parker is co-ordinating this with the various Senior Links for each area. Once the grades have been collated they then have to be passed to myself and other members of the Senior Team so that we can check the correct procedures have been followed and grades match what we were expecting for each student. Please appreciate this is a laborious and time consuming process but most important of all it is a confidential process. We are not under any circumstances allowed to inform students or parents of what grade we are awarding or what ranking we are placing students at within each grade boundary. A few students or parents have contacted staff via email to request information regarding this. **Staff are unable to provide any information regarding individual grades so please do not contact them to request this.** What I will say is that the grades awarded are not based solely on mock examination grades and that guidance has been published and is in the public domain for parents to look at.

In terms of our conversion to becoming an Academy- I suspect that may be further delayed due to the Coronavirus situation. From our point of view, all of our work is completed and we are ready to convert. Staff are making regular welfare calls to parents and I know this has been appreciated by many parents who welcome the support- we will continue to do this. The school is open for children of Key Workers and vulnerable students but it is essential that these numbers remain small. I would remind you that if there is a parent who is not a key worker able to look after the students then the safest thing is for them to remain at home. If your child is of an age where they are able to be left at home alone safely then the safest thing is for them to remain at home. This scheme is only designed to enable key workers to go to work and ensure vulnerable students are safe. It is also important to remember that just because a student might be classed as vulnerable it does not mean they are not safer at home.

Finally, I would just like to pay tribute to our Technology Team who have led the way on developing PPE equipment for the local and wider community. A number of staff gave up their holidays last week to come in to work and begin this- they are now working on a rota system to keep this going despite being "back at work" and setting lessons/ work etc. from home. At time of writing they have made in excess of 1000 facemasks and distributed them to Care Homes, Police, Ambulance staff and even Theatre staff at Sunderland Royal. Believe it or not we are getting requests from as far away as Kent, which is a very sobering thought. A number of local people and companies have been in touch with donations of materials and we are very grateful for this.



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It is a useful reminder that despite these challenges the most important thing is to keep safe and stay at home. As difficult as that can be it is not too much of a sacrifice to ensure the NHS can cope and fewer people become ill. It is wonderful to see how many people value the community we all live and work in. I am very proud of the students of Seaham High School for the way they are approaching this and very proud of the staff for the effort they are putting in to ensure continuity of education and contributing to the community.

As staff and students know I am very fond of a quote and would like to end with two quotes from Captain Thomas Moore who has raised so much for the NHS and made me want to watch the news again-

“My message to the nation right now is, tomorrow will be a good day.

“We will get through this and come out of it stronger, more united and ready to face any challenge together.”

Please take care, follow Government guidance, stay safe and I will keep you updated with information as I receive it.

Your sincerely

G Lumsdon
Head Teacher



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