



9 February 2021

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Dear Parent / Carer

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. I would like to thank those parents that have sent in such positive messages around our approach to online learning. These have boosted morale and encouraged staff to further develop their online learning practices. I would also like to thank all the students that have engaged with the lessons and activities, many in difficult circumstances.

I am writing to update you with details of our ongoing remote learning programme and other notable school activities taking place.

### Parental Survey

I would like to thank all of you who completed our Parental survey regarding our remote learning programme. You can still provide your feedback if you follow the link below:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3RWFZvuneEGMNLPLdk\\_cJKEyy87mQBDhQUxzKpRedtUQUZTU1cwS0M1VU5EUktDRlpTMzZHWkISTS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3RWFZvuneEGMNLPLdk_cJKEyy87mQBDhQUxzKpRedtUQUZTU1cwS0M1VU5EUktDRlpTMzZHWkISTS4u)

You have overwhelmingly supported our remote learning programme. Whilst we all recognise nothing can replace face to face teaching to support a child's academic progress and mental and physical well-being, we believe our programme still provides our students with the necessary education to continue to make progress in their subjects.

Several of your suggestions which we have either implemented or are investigating for the remainder of the lockdown are as follows:

- Parents' evenings
- Pre-recorded lessons for students to access at other times
- Reduce the amount of screen time
- Use the breakout rooms for students with a different focus
- Provide pre-lesson reading materials
- Well-being task in the week
- Tutor contact sessions

We have also undertaken a student survey regarding our programme. Students have described the types of lessons they enjoy and those activities which they do not like. This has been fed back to staff so that these suggestions can be actioned where appropriate.

## **Parents' Evenings**

As a result of your feedback, we have invested in a new parents' evening initiative. An easy-to-use online appointment booking system that allows remote video appointments. This allows you to choose your own appointment times with teachers and you will then be able to have a virtual video appointment during these appointed times.

The dates for the parents' evenings are below. You will receive an invite letter with further details for your specific parents' evening.

- Year 10            9 and 11 February
- Year 7             23 and 25 February
- Year 9             9 and 11 March
- Year 11            23 and 25 March
- Year 8             27 and 29 April

## **Year 9 Pathways (Options)**

We are starting to organise our pathways programme for our Year 9 students. Heads of Department are currently creating videos for their subjects detailing course content, methods of assessment and career opportunities. All this content and advice and guidance on how to make the choices will be available on our website soon. We are currently investigating a virtual choices approach. I will write to parents and Year 9 students after the half term break with full details of our pathways programme.

## **Year 11 Examinations and Teacher Assessed Grades**

As of writing this letter we have not yet heard from the Department of Education regarding the process by which we can assign student grades. We fully expect some sort of exam-board set mini exam papers to support teachers in assigning the grades. The exact nature of this process is not yet known. We shall update you as soon as we have any details. In the last two weeks, you will have received an examinations statement of entry form from our examinations officer. Whilst full examinations have been cancelled, we must still enter students onto the courses so that teachers can assign grades. Please contact the school if you have not received the statement of entry email.

We are still expecting to hold a full suite of mock examinations for all subjects approximately 3 weeks after Year 11 students return from this lockdown. I shall write to Year 11 students and parents providing the details of the mock examinations as soon as arrangements have been finalised.

## **Well-being**

We are all very mindful of both student and parent well-being. To ease pressure and reduce screen time, we will not be setting home learning tasks over the half term period. We are recommending that everyone in our school community takes the opportunity to undertake some form of exercise each day, weather permitting. Kooth is available to all young people that may have a well-being concern ([www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)). The following link provides information for parents, teachers and students:

[https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/01/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/01/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Recent media coverage often conveys a negative view regarding the loss of education, loss of future opportunities and the impact to a child's well-being. I want to reassure parents and students that we believe that the students are in a particularly good place. They are developing skills that will enable them to work in the digital age, they are demonstrating resilience and adaptability; key skills that employers are looking for. We will adjust our curriculum and fill the potential gaps that have been created. We will do this in a timely manner that supports well-being.

We very much hope to be welcoming you all back from 8 March 2021. We envisage a return as was in place in September 2020. As of yet we have not received an update from the DfE, we will inform you as soon as we receive any further information.

I hope that you do manage to have some time over the half term break to unwind and get away from electronic devices.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Hill', written in a cursive style.

**Graham Hill**  
**Headteacher**  
**Pilton Community College**