

8 January 2021

Dear Parent

TCA update letter – 8 January 2021

I would like to begin by wishing you and your families a Happy New Year and I hope you have had a restful holiday period. Please take the time to read this with your child as it contains important information.

Government announcements

This week we have seen further announcements from the Government in relation to education and the opening of schools. On Monday, Prime Minister Boris Johnson stated that all schools would be closed to the majority of students for the rest of this half term and that summer exams are to be cancelled. This is by no means the start to 2021 that we had wanted or hoped for but accept that the Government have deemed it essential at this time and students' learning is to be remote until schools reopen.

On Wednesday, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson spoke further on school closures in the House of Commons. A main point was in relation to digital support and resources. As stated in the last letter we have taken great steps to understand which families have not be able to access the internet at home and those without a suitable device. Families for whom this has been an issue have been contacted and given support so they can access live lessons. Please contact the school as a matter of urgency if for any reason your child cannot access the online offer due to device or internet access. Please continue to check the news items on our website for further in relation to remote learning and updates.

Testing

Information regarding Testing can also be found on the front of our website. With current opening arrangements restricting numbers of students in school there is no testing for students other than those in our critical worker provision and we will contact you again in due course with any further updates about testing. Please do ensure that you have completed the [consent form](#) on our website if you wish your child to be tested, if this becomes available to them.

The Education Secretary also confirmed that GCSE, A and AS Level exams will not go ahead this summer and therefore students will be awarded a form of teacher-assessed grades apart from vocational exams, which can go ahead at the discretion of the centre. We have yet to receive the details of how grades will be calculated but he confirmed that teachers would be given training and support to ensure these will be awarded fairly and consistently. In this ever-changing landscape we will continue to keep you updated with the latest information as soon as we are able to. It is vital that students continue to engage in their remote learning and complete all tasks set throughout the remainder of the school year as we expect the work that they complete to form part of the portfolio of evidence required. We will write to you again in respect of this shortly.

Remote learning update

Over the last week we have successfully delivered over 1000 hours of live lessons to the students across all key stages using Teams live event and Meetings for those students in Post 16. All students are able to access these lessons using Sachel:One (formally Show My Homework) and the links provided by their individual classroom teachers. We have seen a wide variety of Teaching and Learning approaches across all key stages. Staff have been able to give direct feedback to students through the

Q&A panel in each live event and also receive feedback and contributions from students allowing for lessons to be as interactive as possible, and for us to look at attendance of students in each lesson.

Engagement in remote learning this week has been very good, and we will continue to track attendance to live lessons as we would to normal lessons and follow up attendance and engagement where we need to. I ask that you notify us if your child is going to be absent from learning for more than one day.

Moving forward we are continuing to look at any further improvements we can make to the experience for students, and we will keep you updated on any changes that we make (current guides are available [here](#)). In the meantime, we believe the ability for students to access live lessons, to revisit lessons via the recordings that are available after the lesson, to access lesson materials through both Satchel:One and student SharePoint allows us to offer the students a truly worthwhile experience that removes as many barriers to continued learning and progress as possible.

To further enable us to make progress in the area of remote learning, we would ask that you make sure that your child is able to log on to Teams and the schools remote learning platform by the end of next week at the latest. This will be their A0XXXX@theacademycarlton.org username and password. If your child has any issues with a username and or password, please contact ictrequests@theacademycarlton.org who will try to reply to you as quickly as possible. I ask that you please do not call into school unless you do not have access to email for this support. **It is important that all students are able to log in with their school email address and password as soon as possible as we plan to move to this being essential for accessing live learning very soon.**

Exercise books

Spare exercise books (squared for Maths and lined) are available to collect from the One Stop shop across the road from the school from Monday. We have done this to make it more convenient for parents to collect at a time that suits whilst the school is closed.

Reading

During lockdown, we feel it is really important that students still make time to read during the day. It is a fantastic way to add to their learning, to keep their brains sharp and is also a chance to relax and do something away from a screen. To facilitate this for our students in years 7 and 8, Accelerated Reader lessons will go ahead as timetabled lessons throughout the week, and staff will be in Live Events on Teams as with all other lessons. For these, and all other years we have also included links on Stachel:One (Show My Homework) as a Tutor activity, where we have signposted students to recommended non-fiction articles from a variety of sources such as BBC sports and National Geographic. We will also be publishing extracts from a variety of fiction books after next week.

Assemblies and form tutors

In addition to our live lessons from next week there will be a weekly assembly on Wednesday at 11am. The link will be added as a flexible task for all students and I expect all students to watch the assembly during the week. This week form tutors have sent a keep in touch email to parents. Your child's form tutor will continue to be the main point of contact so please do get in touch if you have any questions or queries.

Inter-House and Intra-House Events

We will continue to run a range of fun and interactive Inter-House and Intra-House activities during this school closure period. Further information will be posted on Satchel:One with details of the tasks

and how to submit entries. All students that take part will be awarded achievement points and all points will go towards the House totals.

Provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable groups

We will continue to run this provision each week. As stated in previous letters this provision will be based in an IT room where students will access live lessons as they would from home. Each Monday we will share a Microsoft Form to be completed by 12pm on Wednesday to sign up for provision the following week. You can find guidance on critical worker status and vulnerable groups from the link below: [Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

Free school meals and vouchers

Students in all years who are in receipt of free school meals will receive a £15 Tesco voucher from school for each week they are not in school. These will be sent to you by text message as before. We are aware that some parent's circumstances may have changed recently and may now be eligible for free school meals. Click [here](#) to find out if you are eligible and how to apply. If you need any help to apply or have any questions about FSM, email: office@theacademycarlton.org

I would like to end by taking this opportunity to say a huge well done to everyone for their efforts, determination and work this week. To the staff that planned and delivered live lessons and those that have supported the school, the students that have worked remotely, engaging in live lessons and the parents that have supported them. I am very proud of what we have achieved this week and whilst it is not the start of term we had envisaged; we should all take a moment to reflect on how well we have come together to ensure the young people in our community continue to receive the education they deserve.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



Ms Egwuma
Head of School