

The Dorcan Academy

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Dear Parent/Carer

As you will be aware, since my last communication things have changed once again, and schools are now closed to all students other than vulnerable children and those whose parents are keyworkers. As from tomorrow (Wednesday 6th January) you should **only** send your child to school if they fall into the vulnerable category and you have been contacted by us, or if they have already been offered and **guaranteed** a place as a keyworker child. We have had to limit keyworker places as, under the government criteria, over half of our school students could be eligible for a place and therefore there would be little point asking schools to close, nor would teachers have the capacity to, in addition, provide remote 'live' lessons to those not attending. At The Dorcan Academy, we are expecting that students in Years 9 – 11 who are not classed as vulnerable or with special educational needs will be able to work from home without adult supervision if necessary, and therefore places will be prioritised for keyworker children in Years 7 and 8 where there is **no-one** at home to supervise if we have a high demand. As always, we will do our best to accommodate those who need it but hope that you understand that we have limited resources.

Students should attend in **full school uniform** and bring their **pencil case**; Years 7 – 9 should also bring their **PE kit** as there will be a daily physical activity. It would also be really helpful if all students could bring a pair of **headphones** so that they can access remote learning and videos online. The day will start at the usual time for each student's year group and will finish at 2:50 for everyone, though we will stagger the departure to avoid crossing of bubbles. Free school meals will be provided for those that are eligible and there will be food available to purchase if students do not wish to bring their own.

The plan is that 'live' remote lessons will be delivered to Year 11 starting on Wednesday 6th January and throughout the lockdown according to their timetable, apart from compulsory PE lessons. From 11th January 'live' lessons will also be delivered to Year 10. From the week commencing 11th January, lessons will be set daily for Years 7 – 9 on Show My Homework (SMHW) according to a common timetable, ensuring that students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Some of these lessons will be pre-recorded and a link given to remote learning and others will be set tasks that will be handed in and feedback given by the teacher. There will be a 'live' tutor session each week to enable tutors to see how their students are progressing and coping and we are planning to continue with as many of our normal school routines and activities as possible, for example, assemblies and DEAR time. From 18th January onwards it may become possible for us to provide additional 'live' lessons or to rotate the year groups receiving 'live' teaching and we will keep this under review. Middle leaders are meeting tonight to discuss the options and to revise their plans in the light of the latest announcement.

Following this, they will be asked to produce a 4 -week plan for each year group. All timetable details will be sent separately to this letter. We are in the process of applying for additional laptops from the government to ensure all students can participate; in the meantime, we will provide workpacks for those who have limited or no access. Staff will be monitoring carefully the engagement of students in the work and sanctions will be issued where students fail to engage for no good reason.

Year 11 Vocational Examinations

We have heard today that the government intends for Year 11 Vocational examinations to continue as normal. This means that we will be expecting some Year 11 students in on Monday 11th January for their Sports Studies exam. We plan to test students using the 'lateral flow' tests provided by the government on Friday 8th January prior to return on Monday and you will be allocated a time for your child to attend for the testing. Once they have been tested, they will return home and if your child tests positive, will be notified. A consent form will be sent out separately via School Comms which you will need to return promptly.

We have made the decision to postpone the Year 11 Parents' evening due on 14th January until we have received further advice on how students will be assessed this year due to examinations having been cancelled. We feel that it is important that we are able to provide you with accurate information in order for it to be a purposeful event. We plan to go ahead with our other parents' evenings, including our Options evening virtually. We will be delaying the Year 10 prelim examinations which were due to take place immediately after February half term and will inform you of the new dates as soon as a decision has been made.

I am sorry for the delay in sending out this letter – I wanted to be sure we had thought of everything following the late government announcement. I hope this clarifies a few things for now; I am sure there will be other things that I will need to tell you as time goes on. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this very difficult period for everyone. We are planning to increase our communications with students during this lockdown to ensure they have the required support, however, if you think there is anything further we can do to help and support students during lockdown please do let us know.

Take care everyone.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S Bareham
Headteacher