



Smithdon High School
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Dear Parents

I hope you are all well and are managing to cope with the lockdown and school closure as best as you can. Boris Johnson announced last week that the school closure would be extended until at least 8 March 2021. It is hoped that all students would be able to return to school after this date, but we must also prepare for the possibility that High School students may return later in March or even in a staggered way.

I want to thank all parents for the support they have provided over the past few weeks. I am incredibly proud of the staff at Smithdon who have worked, and continue to work, so hard with the online lessons. Thank you for the many kind comments we have had from our parents regarding the online provision and support all staff are providing. I am also impressed by the resilience and tenacity of our students, who are logging in each hour for their live lessons and engaging in the lessons.

We have thought carefully about our provision and what we feel our students and families need. The live element of all lessons, we hope, provides support and guidance in the learning whilst providing some structure to the day. In order to determine how well our provision is working and what else we could do to improve it, we are asking all parents to complete the following online form:
<https://forms.gle/VtKwhk9WKPG2Ho8v7>

Attendance to the online lessons has been very impressive and in line with normal school attendance. However, we do not want anyone disadvantaged because they are unable to access the live lessons due to lack of technology. If your child requires technology to access the live lessons, or are struggling using a phone or tablet (or equally have to share with other people in the household), please indicate this in the form above. The school can support with computers, laptops and/or Wifi and we will contact you following your completion of the survey.

I am also conscious that we do not want students to spend all their hours on a screen each day and we are aware that the KS3 Knowledge Organisers have been well received. Later this week we will be providing a selection of workbooks for all KS3 and KS4 students, which can be used during the school closure and to support learning when students return to school. Individual departments and class teachers will explain to the students how best to see them. These will be available in school for parents to collect next week. As soon as these are available we will text to confirm the days and time periods we will be open for collection.

Mr Knott wrote to all of Year 11 last week regarding GCSE grades. The government consultation ended on the 29 January and hopefully schools will be informed of processes and procedures soon. The school will inform Year 11 when we receive the information from the Department for Education regarding their GCSE grades. In the meantime, Year 11 students should continue to attend all online lessons and complete all work set by their teachers to maintain and create a broad range of evidence that will help teachers to calculate grades. I also wish to reassure students and parents that we will continue our best endeavours to ensure that no child should be disadvantaged and should be able to progress to their preferred post-16 choices.

Currently we are also planning our Post-14 curriculum for September 2021. Year 9 parents will be contacted after February half term to start the planning and guidance for Year 9 students' post-14 futures.



On a different subject, the police have asked us to pass on a message to all parents. They would like to pass on their “thanks to all parents and students at Smithdon for helping to keep the community safe. We are unaware of any issues brought to police attention involving any pupils at what is a very difficult time: their efforts have not gone unnoticed.”

Lastly, a reminder that Friday 12 February is an INSET day for staff and so no work will be provided for students for this day. Before then, please lookout for the next addition of the Smithdon School newsletter, which will be out just before half term. It is packed full of advice, tips and, most importantly, celebration of the great work our students have been doing and their range of achievements during this school closure. Please keep well and stay safe. We hope to see all of our students back in school soon.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Hirst
Headteacher