



Wednesday 6th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am sure that you are aware of the Prime Minister's message last night enforcing the national lockdown which includes the closure of schools. This is not ideal nor what we wanted but unfortunately, it is where we are.

Firstly, I want to remind parents that school is not closed to all students. We are open daily for vulnerable students and students whose parents are key workers, just as we were for the whole of the last lockdown. If your child qualifies to be here on the basis of being classed as a "vulnerable" student we will likely have contacted them already. If you are a key worker, your child was also be entitled to come in to school. You must register as a key worker so that your child can attend via the NUAST website. Key worker and vulnerable students in Post 16 will be able to work unsupervised in the LRC or upstairs in the mathematics computer room.

Equally, if your child is really struggling mentally they should get in touch with either Miss Jones, myself, their tutor or Ms Fountain. I have emailed the entire year group to emphasise this.

All lessons will move to live lessons from Wednesday.

Examinations

First of all, BTEC Applied Science examinations in the next few weeks are all due to go ahead and students **must** attend these.

My most important message on this is that students should not imagine that work stops now, it does not. Unfortunately, at the time of writing we know no more than what is in the media about how students will get their A levels, but I would emphasise that at this point, you should not worry.

The Prime Minister last night said that summer examinations will not be able to go ahead **as planned**. That does not necessarily mean examinations will be cancelled, regardless of how the media may have interpreted it.

Other home nations have put other plans in place. It is only January; the examination period is six months away. It is hard to believe that students will not be assessed at all. It is possible, if not likely, that there will be some assessment somewhere; whether that is coursework for some subjects, or just a single examination, or some form of assessment students do here in the summer. It would be a **massive** mistake to stop working or attending the live lessons now, because I think it is highly unlikely that examinations will just be cancelled.

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So, our message is that students **must** continue attending their lessons online. These will follow their normal timetable. Students must attend these lessons and we ask you to support us as far as you can in ensuring that students do follow their timetable. On days where your child's teacher is scheduled to supervise key worker and vulnerable students, they will not be able to teach lessons live and the work for the lesson will be put on teams. The teacher should let the students know via teams that this will be the case for that day. If you would like a copy of your child's timetable, please email ksmith@nuast.org who will be happy to email this over to you.

With lessons being live, students must not get into bad habits, and once again I ask for your support with this. They cannot afford to stay up all night and sleep late. We will do our best to chase students who are not attending these lessons, but because our official registers are a legal document we cannot use these to track student attendance online. This makes it much more difficult for us to keep accurate track of attendance and we need to all work together to make sure students are taking the maximum learning from this difficult time.

We would strongly discourage students from taking paid employment during the daytime during lockdown. Due to lessons being live and the normal timetable being followed, this would be equivalent to non attendance at school and would be detrimental to your child's education. We ask that students do not do this.

If your child does not have the ability to do live lessons at home because they don't have access to a laptop, or only have limited access, we need you to let me know as soon as possible. We have a limited supply of loan Chromebooks; these have to be for the entire school, but we would look to prioritise Year 11, 12 and 13 students as far as we can.

In terms of contact, it may not be possible to phone home for all 320 students in the sixth form during this (hopefully short) lockdown period. We will be contacting students who we consider vulnerable or who have known mental health concerns and anxieties to do wellness checks, and it is these students that we will prioritise. I will be in frequent contact with the year group by email.

If you wish to contact us, please email us on the addresses below or phone into school. If you feel that your child needs to speak to someone, please do get in touch with us. Again, it is important that we work together to uncover and deal with potential issues.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself and the team at (aedwards@nuast.org), Ms Fountain (sfountain@nuast.org), Miss Jones (kjones@nuast.org) or Mrs Akhtar (pakhtar@nuast.org)

Yours sincerely



Andy Edwards
Assistant Principal: Post 16 and Careers