



12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Here we are at the end of a lockdown half term, and we hope this letter finds you all well and coping with the ongoing restrictions. Whilst we know that these restrictions are important to help us beat Covid-19, we also know how tough things can be. We continue to be incredibly proud of how well our students are doing with their remote learning and want to thank you again for your support, and for continuing to communicate and maintain contact with us.

On the subject of reopening, the government has expressed the aim of starting to reopen schools from the 8th March. However, at this point nothing has been confirmed and although we are expecting an announcement on the 22nd February, we have also been advised that any change to restrictions will be dependent on infection rates and pressure on the NHS. When schools do reopen it is likely that there will be staggered starts incorporating testing for all year groups. It is difficult not knowing exactly what to expect, but we are getting good at this and would like to reassure you that we have plans ready for every eventuality. We will communicate with you swiftly as soon as we know more.

### **Remote learning**

Over this half term teaching staff have been utilising a range of new interactive teaching tools to engage students with their online learning. Attendance at live lessons has been very good and we are following up with students who might be struggling to access their learning for whatever reason. Please continue to contact us with any issues including problems with chromebooks or wifi, by email at [enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk) including your child's name and year group, or call 01234 342521.

We have also developed the remote learning section of the school website, including a wealth of useful tips and handy guides for parents and students to get the most out of their online learning experience, which can be accessed [here](#). We'd love to hear your views on the remote learning provision, so would very much appreciate it if you could complete our parent survey that can be found [here](#).

During the half term holiday, beginning Monday 15th February, teachers and students will be taking a break from their screens. All of the lessons and resources will still be available on google classrooms to allow students to revise and review work that has been covered, however, we recommend taking some time to 'unplug and unwind' before starting back to the full remote learning timetable on Monday 22nd February.

### **Wellbeing**

Feeling happy, comfortable and healthy is even more important when we are not able to see our friends and family. Over the half term holiday let's all try to take the opportunity to reach out and connect with family and friends, even if you can't see them in person. We should aim to stay active and get some fresh air every day, listen to music, do some baking or attempt some of the many 'unplugged' activities that teachers suggested for students on our wellbeing day last Tuesday. Let's try and take pleasure in the small things. Just as a reminder here is a [link](#) to our

wellbeing bulletin that we shared a couple of weeks ago for some more tips and ideas to support maintaining positive mental health and staying safe online.

## Free School Meals

If your child is eligible for free school meals you will have been receiving vouchers from the school. Over the half term holiday vouchers are being organised by the Local Authority and will be with families very soon. If you have any queries once you have received your vouchers, further information can be found online at <https://www.select-your-reward.co.uk/FAQs> or you can contact Black Hawk directly on 0344 693 9901. If you are still unsure of anything or you wish to opt out of the scheme, you can contact the Council's Family Information Service on Freephone: 0800 023 2057 (24 hour answerphone service available).

Anyone struggling to make ends meet over half term can book free lunches by contacting FACES via:

Email: [office@facesbedford.org](mailto:office@facesbedford.org)

Telephone: 01234 270601

Website: <https://www.facesbedford.org/contact>

Lunch packs will be available from Monday 15th February between 9.30am and 3pm

## Examinations

As you will be aware the Education Secretary confirmed a number of weeks ago that GCSEs, AS and A Level exams will not go ahead this summer. The consultation period has now finished and we are awaiting the outcome, which we hope will come very soon. Although we still do not know the details, we do know that we are expected to continue to teach and assess our exam groups, in order to thoroughly prepare students for the next phase of their lives. Our students are doing amazingly well with their attendance, positive attitude and work ethic, having really taken on board the importance of continuing to engage with their learning. More details will follow as soon as we have them.

As promised, we have been gathering a variety of good news stories, achievements that make us proud, examples of beautiful work and simple acts of kindness to share with our Biddenham School family in our next E-newsletter which is coming up after half term. We'd be delighted to hear from our families with any stories or highlights that you would like to share.

In the meantime, take good care and we'll be in touch again soon.



Mr D Bailey  
Principal



Ms E Grylls  
Head of School