

KLA School Closure Update

Dear pupils, parents and carers,

You will I am sure have noted the statement by the Prime Minister in parliament the day before yesterday, closing the door to any hopes of getting our pupils back immediately after half-term, and extending the school closure for most pupils into March at the earliest. Schools have been promised two weeks notice of any move toward re-opening, and it is likely I think (although not confirmed officially) that a return to school will be a staggered process for secondary schools, with Year 11 being the likely first group to return, following mass testing using Lateral Flow Tests in the week prior to return.

So, home school is going to be with us for a while yet!

Yesterday we shared a link to a parental survey of your experience of remote learning so far in this second school closure. We have had 171 responses in the 24 hours since, overwhelmingly very positive with some sensible suggestions about things we might be able to do to make our provision even better. I will be completing a detailed review and analysis of your views over the weekend - I promise that I do read every single response – and hopefully be able to use your feedback to make any changes that we feel might help us provide better support for your children during an incredibly challenging time.

While I am reviewing your responses, if there is a concern or query raised (and if I can see who has raised it) I will try to make sure someone in the team gets back to you in the next week or so to see if we can do any more to help overcome the issue together. If you haven't yet had a chance to complete the survey it will remain live for the foreseeable future, so you have plenty of chance to share your experiences of lockdown learning with us.

As always, if you feel we should be doing something better, or need our help with any aspect at all of home schooling, please do email your child's Head of Year and they will do all they can to assist – including, increasingly, being able to offer places for in-school supervision for those pupils who are not engaging as well as we or their parents would like. While we cannot offer this to everyone, we have managed to find places for 50 pupils currently, and could find space for a few more if we agree that this would be clearly in everyone's best interest.

I do need to also state (one more time) just how brilliant our parents are doing at being home-school teachers! With the improvements we have made to Teams lesson delivery, hopefully less of that burden is now falling on parents, but be in no doubt, we think parents are doing an amazing job in incredibly difficult circumstances and are grateful for your support. As dad of a boy in Year 5 (who is really not enjoying home school) and another son in Year 11 (who meets every 'lazy teenage boy' stereotype and requires constant prodding!) please believe me when I say that I totally appreciate how hard it is to engage, motivate and support your children from home – and I am supposed to be a professional at this!! There is no 'perfect' right now, and doing the best we can is the aim, with the staff team here ready to support wherever possible.

Year 11 Parent Consultation Day, Wednesday 3rd February – No Teams lessons on that day.

A letter was sent yesterday to all Year 11 pupils and parents, containing information about current assessment grades and current predicted final grades, as well as more information about the Year 11 Parent/Teacher Consultation Day that we are holding on Wednesday. As I shared in last week's

bulletin, this will have some knock-on impact on pupils in other years, as teachers will not be holding live lessons on Teams on that day. Work will be provided on Go4Schools for all lessons on that date.

This will be our first attempt at a virtual parent/teacher consultation – if it is a smooth experience, we will look to run others for other year groups in the coming weeks, as I think that this would help reassure parents about the progress being made by most students in most subjects. Obviously, this does mean that lessons have to be taken offline on those dates chosen for these parent/teacher consultation days, but I sense from speaking to many parents that the chance of face-face conversations with your child's subject teachers would make this a worthwhile trade-off. We are currently collating assessment information for all pupils in each subject in Years 7-10, which should be ready to publish to parents before the half-term break, and which would then provide a basis for those consultation sessions which I hope to run after half-term.

As always, I hope this latest update provides the information that you feel you need to be confident about the current situation. If you have any queries that I have not addressed here, please do email me on alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk and I will do my best to answer them.

I hope to have more information next week about the provision of FSM vouchers over the February half-term, any updates to laptop allocations from the DfE and the process for gaining parents and students consent for mass LFT testing before any return to site. In the meantime, thanks as always for your support of our work – it is very much appreciated – and I hope everyone enjoys a restful weekend away from their computer screens and home-school requirements!

Best wishes,



Alan Fletcher