

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

HEAD OF SCHOOL: Mr I Bacon

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to week two of this term and a second week of Remote Learning. Thank you ever so much for all your kind comments and feedback last week. It is great to receive both the positive and the constructive suggestions from you all, as you, our families, are the ones at home experiencing the challenges of online learning. I would welcome feedback and suggestions via email to [admin@watling.academy](mailto:admin@watling.academy). I will try to reply to as many as I can when they are forwarded to me, or one of the other members of the Leadership Team will try to acknowledge or respond.

A slightly shorter letter today outlining a few changes from the government and a couple of reminders: -

#### **Keyworker/Critical Worker Provision**

There has been a change to the government advice on children of keyworkers attending school during lockdown. The new advice is...

***“Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.”***

This means that instead of encouraging the parents or carers of these children to send them into school, the advice has fundamentally shifted now to staying at home unless that is impossible.

I do understand that it is difficult accommodating children at home, particularly when you may be trying to work (I have three children home here with me at the moment!) but the rates of transmission of the virus mean that we should only be accommodating students at Watling Academy where it is absolutely necessary.

The link for next week's provision has opened this morning and will close on Thursday at 4pm. Any new additions to the keyworker group will need to provide evidence of keyworker status.

#### **COVID-19 Testing On-site**

As mentioned in my letter a week ago, we are beginning to set up the necessary infrastructure and undertake the training to facilitate on-site testing using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs). We will complete our preparations for this before the end of the week and will be in a position to offer those students who are in the keyworker group an on-site test early next week.

To reiterate, this is entirely voluntary and will require parental consent. It is not a condition of coming on to the Watling Academy site. I will send you more details later in the week or early next week. We will be extending the same offer to the small number of staff who are on-site.

### **Free School Meals**

Students who are entitled to a free school meal should have received the online vouchers for last week and this week. There is likely to be a change in the next week or so with the government set to introduce a National Voucher scheme and I will send out details when I have them.

### **Access to Tablets/Devices**

I believe we have been in contact with all students who are in need of a device or mobile data to allow them to learn remotely, but please do send an email to Mr Cassidy [cassidyj@watling.academy](mailto:cassidyj@watling.academy) if this is something you are still having trouble with. It is possible to access some aspects of online learning through a Play Station or Xbox. The instructions to do so can be found [here](#).

### **Opportunity from the National Museum of Computing**

The National Computing Museum at Bletchley Park are hosting some online quizzes during January with several prizes to be won for the whole family. The quizzes will be held virtually on consecutive Sundays at 4pm starting on the 17<sup>th</sup> January and are free to enter. Prizes include family tickets and annual passes.

Quiz round 1 - Connect - Your Digital Family - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021 4pm [Found here](#)

Quiz round 2 - Talk - Your Digital Family - Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021 4pm [Found here](#)

Quiz round 3 - Act - Your Digital Family - Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 4pm [Found here](#)

### **Keeping in touch**

I know that this is a time when both students, families and indeed staff can feel isolated and less connected with others than during 'normal' life. We encourage students to connect with each other at break and lunch time during the Academy day and also after hours – they draw a lot from that interaction. Also remember that we are here for you, no question or issue is too small, and we will do our best to support every student and parent with Remote Learning. Please do not dwell on any issue – contact us!

I will aim to send out at least one weekly communication to keep you in the loop and updated on any news we have. I am visiting online lessons this week so next week I will be able to share with you some of the great learning the students are undertaking. In the meantime, I would like to thank **7RPR**, **7GHN** and **7CBL** for cheering me up with the lovely, artistic robins they drew!

Yours faithfully,



Mr I Bacon  
Head of School