

Dear Parents

I hope this finds you well and coping with, what is an extraordinary state of affairs. It is clear that the current situation will go on for some time and will change our society in ways that will not be apparent until we look back from the other side of it. I want to start by apologising for not communicating as often as I would like over the past few weeks. I have had all the recognised symptoms that kept me incapacitated for a couple of weeks, but, touch wood, I can start being of some use again now.

We are in constant communication with the Local Authority who offer advice and protocols for us to follow, which we combine with common sense and our local requirements, as we attempt to find our way through this situation. We are taking steps to safeguard our children and consequently there are a few staff in school during each morning to allow us to speak to parents and support our IT systems. Therefore it is possible to telephone and speak to a senior member of staff between 9 and 12 each day; or receive technical support.

As you know the staff are sending work home via the TEAMS programme so that students have the opportunity to continue their schooling. The distance learning is progressing as well as can be expected given that the internet is under tremendous pressure at this time. We understand that access to this is not universally straightforward due to lack of laptops etc. but it is at least an attempt to keep contact with your children and, though not the same as having their teacher in front of them it is the best that can be done in the circumstances. When we reopen, rest assured that the teaching programmes will take into account the varied progress made during this enforced break.

In addition, Mr Nayler has sent e-mails to the staff and parents of Year 11 and Year 13 students with regard to the grading arrangements for their exams. Teachers have until the end of May to complete this process. Clearly the education hierarchy have not established how they are going to award qualifications to the children and how they are going to ensure there is fairness and validity. However, you can rest assured that we will be doing our best to ensure that our children gain the best possible outcomes. In this context, the results obtained by our students over the past few years, and the steady increase in the school outcomes during that time, will support the professional judgments made by our teachers and consequently the attainment of this year's Year 11 and 13 students.

This school is, as always, at the centre of its community and as such the technology department is in school, to use the workshops, producing protective equipment for our local healthcare professionals. This is in addition to the safety goggles, gloves and plastic aprons already delivered to the NHS by our science department.

When we originally closed we sent vouchers out to all children who are entitled to Free School Meals. This has now been overtaken by a government scheme. However, my understanding is that this is not working as efficiently as it could, mainly due to technical issues. If you are suffering under this please contact the school.

Whilst the situation remains worrying and there is no sign of an end to the current school closure; we are doing all we can to support your children. I am sure that you would like me to thank all those staff members who continue to give of their best to care for and support UVHS students. I will continue to update you as the situation progresses.

Take care and keep yourselves safe.



Matt Hardwick

Headteacher, UVHS.