

26th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are safe and well, and adjusting to spending so much time at home. We all have a great deal to cope with right now, so apologies for the intrusion of another letter.

Firstly, I wanted to say thank you for finding ways of keeping your children at home this week. Schools were really alarmed when the list of people entitled to send their children to school came out – it felt like almost everyone would be able to justify sending their children to school. Like all organisations, I have staff who are unwell, have underlying health conditions or have a member of their family vulnerable should they catch Covid-19. I am very grateful to all of you for helping us manage this extraordinary situation.

I would also say at this point that we are very happy to look after the children who are coming in. I know that this is the only way that some parents can carry on delivering frontline services to help tackle this pandemic. You have our admiration and support.

My final thanks is to our staff who have responded superbly to this crisis. I knew we were lucky to have great teachers and support staff at Farmor's, but the events of the last two weeks have really brought this home.

Keeping school in perspective

Suddenly finding yourselves having to supervise your children doing school work can be very stressful. It is important that we (teachers, students and parents) keep work in perspective. There are more important things right now than getting stressed over school work. In this spirit, please note the following:

- Students should just do their best. If they don't understand a task, or struggle to do it, and it is upsetting them, then they should leave it and move on.
- If you think your child has worked enough for one day, tell them to stop and do something else instead. Every child will have a different tolerance level for sitting and working.
- It is very difficult for teachers to estimate how long a piece of work will take. If you find that a teacher keeps under-estimating the time required to do a piece of work, please drop them an email and let them know how long it is taking your child to do the work.



I have asked teachers not to go over the top with setting work. I have also suggested that they set basic tasks that everyone should be able to complete, then extension tasks for those who have the ability and self-discipline to do more. Obviously we may push older students a little more, particularly those in Year 10 and 12.

Year 11 and 13

When examinations were cancelled, we asked Year 11 and 13 students to consider putting together a 'portfolio' of work in the time they would have spent revising. We wanted students to have something positive and constructive they could focus on: tangible evidence of all they had managed to achieve through their studies.

I would like to reiterate that this is not a required task. If students present a portfolio, then we will accredit this internally. However, this work is not related to the awarding of final grades.

Cancelled events and trips

We are working on the assumption that schools will still be closed after the Easter break, and for the foreseeable future. We are looking ahead to the events planned for the summer term and making decisions about what is cancelled, postponed or might still go ahead. We will provide details soon about the various planned school trips that your child may be booked onto.

We are mindful of the financial pressures that some families will be under. We are working to ensure that those entitled to free school meals receive food vouchers, that we claim back money from cancelled bookings and that we recoup losses through insurance. There will be further announcements from government about funds we can draw on for costs incurred by this crisis, so we will access this funding too. We are trying to reclaim as much money as we can so we can push it back to you. Please bear with us whilst we put in contingency plans and chase refunds.

Support

Please remember that we are here to support your children. The usual lines of communication are still open. Please communicate with tutors, teachers and the Head of Year if you have a concern or need help.

Kind regards

Matthew Evans
Headteacher