



21 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you, our students and your families safe, well and healthy.

Welcome back to Term Five; a very different sort of term than that we usually experience at this time of year.

The purpose of this letter is to provide updates on our online learning provision, and details about how we will be continuing to support your son or daughter during this national crisis.

Online learning

Our teachers will continue to provide work and learning resources for students in the following ways:

- Resources and tasks on Show my Homework
- Recording guided learning sessions on Microsoft Teams
- Live teaching support sessions: these will be held during one of the normal lesson slots for the particular subject, and allow students the opportunity to interact with their teachers and get advice on their learning.

We are incredibly mindful that whilst we are setting this work, we do not know your individual circumstances or any barriers that may prevent your son/daughter from fully accessing our provision. Unfortunately, some of our families may have been personally affected by COVID-19. There may be issues with having to share devices, or broadband dropout. Indeed, some of our students may have very limited digital access, or be finding it difficult to concentrate or remain motivated during this challenging period. In the coming days, we will be sending a student survey to try and capture some more information about how our students are coping with home learning. In the meantime, the following guidelines apply:

- Please ensure that as a minimum, your son/daughter continues to engage with their education. We are not setting penalties or hard limits for what should be achieved, but do ask for your support in ensuring that they continue to value their education and engage with us, their school community. This will support their return to school, whenever that happens. Please do contact your Head of Year of class teacher if you have any specific concerns about your son/daughter.



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- Please do not be concerned about your son/daughter “falling behind”. We want them to access as much as they can, and to ask us for support whenever they need it; their welfare is our key priority. When we return to school, we will be assessing their knowledge and then planning their ongoing curriculum accordingly. Of course, any work they can complete now will be incredibly valuable to address this unavoidable gap in their education, and their teachers are doing all they can to try and reduce the effect of this interruption to normal lessons via the work they are setting.
- One of our ongoing priorities at Victory is student literacy. Please do encourage your son/daughter to read as much as possible, and complete the writing tasks they are given by their teachers. This is particularly important at a time when we are spending so much time in front of computers; ultimately, students have to sit public examinations where their ability to read and write fluently affects their outcomes in every discipline. Our English department have created a newsletter, available on our website and social media, with further guidance and opportunities for our young people to improve their literacy.
- Structure is key: we would recommend that, wherever possible, students regularly set aside time daily, during normal school hours, to complete their online learning. Young people are currently out of their normal school routines, and it would be highly beneficial for them to establish their own home learning routines to maximise their engagement and progress with our online provision.
- If students require additional resources to those provided by our staff, there is a wealth of online educational resource now available. The Department of Education approved links are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

I will now set out some messages for individual year groups.

Years 11 and 13

As discussed in my letter of 3rd April, we have now received guidance from OFQUAL explaining how grades are to be awarded this summer. We are holding ‘virtual’ meetings with subject leaders about this and staff will spend the next few weeks calculating these grades. I would kindly remind you that we are not able to discuss these grades with parents or students, as per government guidance.



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I can confirm now that we will not, therefore, continue to provide new work for students to complete as part of their GCSE or A level courses. However, we aim to provide all students in Years 11 and 13 with a range of resources (both subject-specific and generic) which we would encourage them to work through to help prepare them for the next stage of their academic career. For those Year 11 students who are joining our sixth form, we will be supplying transition materials to prepare them for their forthcoming BTEC or A Level courses. These will be issued via Show My Homework and Microsoft Teams in the coming weeks. If, once students receive these resources, they have any queries, they should contact Miss Simperl or Miss Jordan (Year 11) or Miss Hryniewicz (Year 13).

Years 10 and 12

We will be prioritising these two year groups as they are now entering the final 12 months of their GCSE or A level courses. Staff will continue to set work as they were before Easter through Show My Homework and Microsoft Teams and it really is crucial for all students to engage in this provision to the best of their abilities. OFQUAL are due to issue further updates in the coming weeks re: Year 10 and 12 courses and we will naturally update students and parents/carers as this becomes available.

Years 7, 8 and 9

Again, staff will continue to set work through Show My Homework and Microsoft Teams just as they were before Easter. We received a few emails from parents before Easter, concerned that too much work was being set for students in these year groups. We accept that it could appear daunting if this work is all shown in a list of 30-40 tasks on Show My Homework. We continue to just urge students to try and complete study for each subject on their timetable, to work through each task as best as they can, and ask for our help or guidance wherever needed.

All our staff are working really hard to do our best to deliver a high standard online support package for all of our students, in circumstances that none of us have prepared for. I am very proud of our teachers, and what they are achieving in these unprecedented times. However, from time to time things do go wrong and at such times we do need parents to let us know. If you have any concerns going forward please contact us at school using office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk, so those concerns can be addressed and any issues dealt with. Any technical issues should be issued to our Head of Curriculum and Academic Standards, Mr McLellan at r.mclellan@tsatrust.org.uk. Please be mindful that we are naturally experiencing a very high volume of emails during this period, and are only asking our staff to be working during normal school hours and respond to queries during this time.



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Behaviour

Unfortunately, there have been some isolated instances of students disrupting online teaching support sessions with inappropriate behaviour. I am sure you will agree that this is unacceptable, and ask for your support in ensuring that your son/daughter behaves responsibly when engaging with us virtually. All staff have now been issued with an “online behaviour expectations” slide that will appear at the start of their learning presentations. We will contact you directly if there are concerns about your son/daughter’s behaviour. To protect the learning of all of our students, repeated failure by individual students to comply with our expectations for behaviour could ultimately lead to their access to live teacher support being revoked.

Many thanks for your continued support, and very best wishes to you and your families.

Yours sincerely

Ms M Gage
Director of Education (Chatham)



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