



St Andrew the Apostle

Greek Orthodox School

20 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

At this difficult time, we are all facing new and ever changing challenges but the resilience, joy and good humour of our students here in school and the kindness and warmth of our wider community reminds me how fortunate I am to be your Headteacher. I hope this newsletter finds you as well as can be expected and my very best wishes extend to all of you and your loved ones.

Year 11 and Year 13

The decision has also been made that assessments and examinations will not go ahead this summer. The Secretary of State for Education has assured schools that children will get the qualifications that they need. As I am sure you will appreciate, this has caused uncertainty and worry for our Year 11 and 13 students who have been fully committed to their studies whilst at St Andrew the Apostle and have shown their dedication more than ever this year.

As a priority, senior staff met with Year 11 students to alleviate any concerns or worries that they have around this decision. We answered a series of questions from students to reassure them about this unprecedented situation. Understandably, students were upset at the prospect of no formal leaving celebration however, we will endeavour to organise a special event on their return to school to recognise their achievements. We are encouraging students to be disciplined and continue to work independently at home via Show My Homework to help them in their progression to Post 16 education, training and beyond for which further guidance will be issued next week.

We are so very proud of students in these year groups and look forward to celebrating their time with us later when we will have a prom and a leaver's event for these wonderful young people. It should be underlined however, that any such event will take place after restrictions are lifted. The hard work of our committed and dedicated students will stand them in good stead for their future years as the knowledge and experiences they have gained are so much more than can ever be recognised by examination grades.

We look forward to hearing from the children in these year groups as they go forward into the world to fulfil the potential they have – our world will be better because of their contribution to it.

School will be closed for the vast majority of students on Monday, except for a small number of students including children of key workers and children who have a social worker or educational health care plan. It is important that we adhere strictly to these definitions.

Remote Learning for All Year Groups

We have prepared for remote learning by distributing work to all students with resources and work to see them through the next two weeks up until Easter.

Starting from Monday, we will begin the process of remote teaching in earnest. We are all set up to go and we are confident that we can give the students a good provision. Using Show My Homework we will set tasks and activities on a daily basis. Bite size chunks of learning will come to you and your son/daughter via the app or website in the normal way. We will be giving work that should occupy your sons/daughters for the same amount of time as their normal lessons with some opportunities for extension and further study. You should find your son/daughter has enough to do to fill the day whilst still allowing time for exercise, play, board games and fun.



St Andrew the Apostle

Greek Orthodox School

Students will be able to communicate with their teachers via Show My Homework and you will be able to see what teachers are saying on the app as well. Students can also send messages to teachers via the school website. Perhaps they want to write to their Form Tutor or Head of Year. They can write to me or one of the Senior Leadership Team. We will listen to any problems that they are having and try to get it sorted out.

You can help by making sure that there is a space to work and basic equipment available at home. Obviously, IT is going to be an issue so we are trying to set activities that will not lead to three siblings fighting over the one laptop in the house! Most things will be accessible on a mobile phone. I can imagine that broadband and 4G struggling to cope on Monday. We will see. If the technology breaks or if you are having other problems, please remember that students cannot go far wrong with reading, going for a walk, starting a journal or diary and doing some practical things together at home. Gardening? Baking? Cleaning? All good! Perspective will come with time and I am sure that things will work out. We will do all we can to continue to support students through the weeks ahead and give them the best possible experience despite the adversity. As we learn more we will pass it on to you.

In school, from Monday, we will be offering an important service for students of key-workers. We have written to all families who have expressed interest in this. If you have not already done so, please use our on-line survey to tell us what support you might want: <https://tinyurl.com/standrew-covid-signup>. Students who qualify for Free School Meals, but not for our key-worker supervision programme, will receive via post Sainsbury's vouchers which will allow them to purchase a meal from their local Sainsbury's store.

Students in school will not be taught very differently to those who are at home. They will be in our ICT Suite supervised by staff who will be here on a rota basis. We will help students with the set activities, and they will be able to help each other as well. There will be breaks and lunchtimes and we will look to ensure that some PE opportunities exist for them.

We will continue to release a Newsletter every week with tips for learning at home. Please feel free to send any questions you would like answered or issues you want addressed. Please also share what you are up to. I am sure other families would appreciate the chance to see what others are getting up to. Any good tips or ideas? Please let us know! Write to: admin@standrewtheapostle.org.uk

Whilst the school is closed, our duty and responsibility to safeguarding our pupils remains. Our regular "check ins" with families needing a bit of extra help and support will continue throughout the period of school closure, just as if the school was open. Please do not feel offended if a member of school staff calls to check in with you, and to speak to your child. If you have any safeguarding concerns whilst the school is closed, for your child or for any other pupil from the school, please contact Mr Sweet via admin@standrewtheapostle.org.uk

Thank you again for your continued support, and we will be in touch with more information when we can. I am thinking of you all and we urge you to please get in touch if you need anything. As ever, I am proud of our students, colleagues and community – we will face this together and emerge stronger from it. I wish you all good health over the coming weeks and thank you for your support over this period.

God bless you all.

Mr Michael Vassiliou

Headteacher - Acting