



The
Portsmouth Academy

6th January 2021

Dear parents and carers,

I write to you today in light of the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 4th January 2020. You will be aware that, due to rising infection rates of Covid-19, the Prime Minister has announced a new national lockdown in a bid to prevent the further spread of the virus. As part of this, all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England, including our school, The Portsmouth Academy, are to be closed from today until at least the end of half term in February, except for the children of key workers or vulnerable children. Nurseries are able to remain open.

Year 11

Additionally, the Prime Minister also indicated that the summer series of exams would not go ahead for our current Year 11. This announcement is a full reversal of the government policy, which has been in place since September. It also comes at a time when it is far more challenging for us to reassure the children, as they are not on site with us. This is of course a frustration as we desperately wish to support them through this change in policy, which will no doubt have made them feel a sense of anxiety, as there is limited detail as to what will replace the examinations. Today the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, addressed parliament and stated that students would receive grades via a process of teacher assessed grades rather than through the use of the algorithm which was applied to teacher assessed grades by the government after they were submitted in 2020. As yet we have no further details around how this will be put into practice, or what the timeline will be.

This is not the time to give up, or lose hope! Now, more than ever, it is vital that Year 11 step up, and take control of their future and work with our staff to achieve the best possible awarded grades that they can. Attendance to online learning and interventions is not optional. The hard work that the children put in now will have an impact on the grades they are awarded in the summer – even if we do not have the blueprint currently about how schools/Ofqual will go about this assessment.

Please do rest assured that we will go above, and beyond to work with this year group and to keep you all as up-to-date as soon as we have information and have had time to digest it ourselves. If you have any urgent questions, please email Mr Andrews (Assistant Principal: KS4) or Mrs Piper (Head of Year).

c.andrews@tsatrust.org.uk

h.piper@tsatrust.org.uk

Remote Learning

Students in all year groups should follow their normal timetable as of 6th January, including morning registration with their tutors. Teachers will send invites for live lessons and students are expected to attend all lessons. Deputy Heads of Year and our Attendance Improvement Co-ordinators will be contacting parents of those children who are not accessing and registering for online lessons to try to troubleshoot any challenges you and they may be facing.

www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

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It is important that when attending their lessons, children are engaged and participating in the online learning provided. Please ensure your child has access to a pen, pencil and paper to be able to complete their learning. It is always useful to ask your child 'what did you learn in that lesson, or today?' We have found this question elicits deeper responses from the children and it is helpful for you to be aware of how they are making progress. Our teachers will be expecting students to upload their learning into their Teams_folder in order for them to assess your child's progress and plan effective sequences of lessons to support them.

If your child does not have access to a suitable device for their online learning then please contact Miss Meale, k.meale@tsatrust.org.uk / 03333 602200 to request the loan of a laptop for the period of lockdown.

On site provision for vulnerable students and children of critical workers

If your child meets the government classification of being a vulnerable student, you will have been contacted already, and offered a place within our on-site provision. The provision is also in place for the children of critical workers. Please complete the form at the following web address if this provision is required. For both provisions, we ask that the forms are completed 24 hours before requiring access to this so that we can plan staffing accordingly.

tinyurl.com/TPASupervision

If you are a critical worker, we will request your child brings in evidence of your job role, or that you email or text the school evidence, clearly stating your child's name and year group. A full list can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?utm_source=4%20January%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19#critical-workers

As you know, we have worked incredibly hard since the start of the pandemic in March to keep our school community as safe as possible, and I would like to remind you of the continued safety measures in place on school grounds:

- Everyone is expected to remain in their allocated bubbles
- Students are encouraged to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and are expected to wear facemasks in communal areas
- Visitors / Parents must wear face coverings on school grounds, including at the school gates

Please note, where possible, we are working with windows open in classrooms for added ventilation, and as the cold days have returned, pupils may need a few more layers of clothing such as tights or leggings underneath skirts, and plain grey jumpers (black for year 11). Full school uniform must be worn if your child is attending on site provision.

Free School Meals

If your child(ren) receives benefits related free school meals, you will be able to attend the school each week and be provided a weekly food parcel. The parcels will be delivered to schools and parents will need to collect these. In unique circumstances i.e. if you or someone in your household has tested positive, is self-isolating or travel to the school is difficult, please let us know and alternative arrangements will be made. We will make contact with eligible families next week to confirm collection dates and the process. If you feel your circumstances have changed and that your child may now qualify for free school meals then please go to the following web address to apply through PCC.

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/schools/school-meals/>

Staying well both physically and mentally

It is very important to us that we have an open communication with you regards how your child is managing lockdown, if they are working remotely. Please do contact us if your child is struggling with their learning, or isolation.

None of us at TPA wants the children not to be on site, and we are disappointed to once again, be in the position where we are not face-to-face – we miss the children. With this in mind, I would like to remind you how important it is that we follow the government guidance around staying at home as much as we can at this time in order not to overwhelm the NHS. If we all follow the guidance then I am sure that the lockdown will be over more quickly and the children can get back to the classroom, where they belong!

I am confident that our remote learning offer is very strong, and our teachers and support staff are working incredibly hard to ensure that the children do not miss out on learning. Please therefore ensure your child registers at tutor time, and attends and engages with all online lessons.

Yours sincerely



Mrs R Grey
Principal
The Portsmouth Academy