

22 April 2020

Dear Parents

Knole Academy Covid Update 22 April 2020

Thank you for your continued support in this unprecedented time. In the last few days we have been creating playlists on the Youtube channel which should make accessing the appropriate material easier. The Heads of Year have been reviewing those students who are yet to access the online material and we shall be prioritising them for tutor phone calls to ensure there are no issues in being able to access the set work. I would encourage all students to engage in the online work, which will undoubtedly help prevent learning loss over such an extended period of time.

The latest advice, based on promoting good mental health, is that students should be doing a maximum of three hours online tuition per day, as with any generic advice this will not suit all learners, so please just use it as a guideline. We are not expecting students to make the same progress or cover the same amount of work as they would have done if they were still at school. Thankfully for all those employed in education, I do not believe that we are at a stage where virtual learning is as effective as being in attendance at school with a teacher but, work done at home will have a positive impact.

The government have just launched an online portal to support learning called the Oak National Academy, the link is below. I believe the resources that we have uploaded are better suited to our students but not every school has provided such resources and therefore the government has created this website. It covers a greater number of topics than we have currently uploaded. The Oak National Academy can be accessed here: <https://www.thenational.academy/>

BBC bitesize which has always been a useful resource has upgraded its website with additional material and daily lessons <http://bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

For the particular attention of Year 11 and 13 students and parents

The lessons on these new websites cover Years 7-10, Year 11 has been excluded as the government has essentially determined that Year 11 and 13 has been completed. With this in mind, we shall stop setting work for Year 11 and 13 at the end of this week. From the start of May, we shall start to upload work which will support Sixth Form courses for September 2020 start. The work will be sent to all Year 11 students, they should just pick the subjects that they have put down to study in Sixth Form. We hope that their Sixth Form choice will be Knole Academy but it will be helpful for other Sixth Forms as well. If students have chosen to study vocational Level 2 courses elsewhere it would be worth contacting those centres to see if they have preparation work that can be accessed.

We have received a number of enquiries from parents. The two most frequently asked questions are:

1. Whether work done now can be used to inform grades.
2. What the predicted grades for a student are.

To answer these, I would refer you to the government guidance:

Summer 2020 grades for GCSE, AS and A level, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths. Guidance for teachers, students, parents and carers. Updated 16 April

1. Should schools and colleges be setting students new work to inform the grade they submit?

There is no requirement to set additional mock exams or homework tasks for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade, and no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools were closed. Where additional work has been completed after schools and colleges were closed on 20 March, Heads of Centre should exercise caution where that evidence suggests a change in performance. In many cases this is likely to reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done.

Therefore, the work done to date by Year 11 and 13 students will be taken into consideration by teachers at Knole Academy, equally if work has not been done students will not be penalised. As we now need to compile final grades, we are not setting any more work as it will not impact on grading.

2. Will students see the centre assessment grades their school or college submits?

No. It is important schools and colleges do not share provisional grades, nor rank orders, with students or parents and carers. This is to protect the integrity of the teachers' judgements, and to avoid teachers, Heads of Department or Heads of Centre feeling under pressure to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence.

Once centre assessment grades have been submitted to exam boards, the process to produce the final grades will start. More information will be given to teachers, students, parents and carers at the time final results are issued.

I am confident that all teachers at Knole Academy will use their professional judgement to provide grades that are a true and fair reflection of student achievement. We will not entertain requests for higher grades from students or parents as it is a direct challenge to the integrity of the process. We would normally have sent a data report to parents at Easter and this will still be sent, it may not present the grades that students want but it may reduce the anxiety of not knowing. Please note that we cannot guarantee that these will be the grades submitted to the Department for Education as per the guidance above. More importantly, and I suspect the real reason they do not want centres to disclose grades, is that parents and students should not assume that these will be the final GCSE grades they receive, there may be significant adjustments by examination boards before grades are awarded.

The government has announced that there may be an appeals process for grades awarded but, there are no details at present. The autumn series will allow students to take examinations if they are unhappy with the grade they are awarded, students will get to keep whichever is the highest grade.

If information is updated or changes, I shall of course send an update.

Wishing everyone the very best of health.

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