



## **GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY**

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email:  
[info@garstangcommunityacademy.com](mailto:info@garstangcommunityacademy.com)

14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Almost two weeks in and I feel that we are all generally coping really well under such difficult circumstances. So, well done to you, well done to GCA staff and, most of all, well done to the children for their on-going hard work and resilience.

Again, I have lots of information to try to distil and communicate:

### **Remote Learning & Live Lessons:**

Live lessons for all year groups have started this week and I've been privileged to have been in many of these this week as a guest and have been really pleased with how well structured these lessons are and how well students have accessed them and engaged with them.

Do please let us know in the usual ways (e.g. call school and press option 1) if your child is effectively 'absent' for a particular day so we can adjust our expectations of their engagement for that day. We have, again, had nearly 100% of students engaging with work this week although some students didn't submit all of their work on time. We have a general expectation that work will be submitted by 4.00pm and we will let parents know if work has not been submitted by then, via an email/text later that evening. The only way we have been able to 'automate' this to some degree, is by regarding the non-submission as a 'consequence'. There are no behaviour points associated with these reminders, they are just a way of keeping you informed. Clearly if these non-submissions accumulate, there could be further consequences. If your child has particular difficulties with submitting work before 4.00pm, please let us know and we can take them off the list. This could even be for a specific reason such as they have a doctor's appointment on a particular date. All of that said, there is still the potential for us missing these reasons and for human error to be a factor (especially as I am personally involved in this process), so please be understanding if you do still get the reminder.

Please continue to keep a handle on children's internet/online use – keep checking what sites they are accessing, keep parental controls and web filters at sufficiently high settings and do have a look at the useful resources under our E-safety button on the website. If children, or you, have any concerns, please just contact us through the usual channels, or via the 'Keep Me Safe' button on the website.

Please remember, if your child has subject specific questions, they can email the subject@ email addresses e.g. [science@garstangcommunityacademy.com](mailto:science@garstangcommunityacademy.com) .

### **Vulnerable and Critical Worker Provision:**

Again, please let us know in the usual ways (e.g. call school and press option 1) if your child will be absent from the provision, if we would expect them on a particular day. The provision has gone really well again all week, and is definitely busy although I do know that GCA Critical Workers are only using us when they really need to, thank you.



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Just as a reminder, children are required to wear their face masks at all times inside, including at all times in the provision rooms.

As long as we have the necessary consent, children in the provision will be tested twice for COVID 19 using the Lateral Flow Devices when they join the provision for the first time.

### **Mass testing:**

Testing has gone really well this week, with all children and staff on site who had given consent tested and no positive results – phew!

Children who have actually had COVID-19 should not have an in-school Lateral Flow Test within 90 days of when their positive PCR COVID-19 test was taken. Please let us know if this is the case when children return to school at any point and would therefore be due to be tested.

### **Free School Meals:**

I am delighted to say that we are able to move back to a vouchers system – Mrs Smith will be in touch.

### **Year 11 Exams:**

We were, this week, 'copied in' to a letter from Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, Secretary of State for Education, to Simon Lebus, Chief Regulator Ofqual which, I feel, is a somewhat strange way of communicating with schools. However, Mr Williamson does, in this letter, clarify the Government's position to award summer GCSE grades being 'based on teacher assessment' and are asking Ofqual to 'consult' on how best to do this, Mr Williamson goes on to say that 'a breadth of evidence should inform teachers' judgements ... I would like to explore the possibility of providing externally set tasks or papers, in order that teachers can draw on this resource to support their assessments of students.' So, still a possibility of some external testing but with lots of unanswered questions.

As far as Vocational and Technical Qualifications are concerned, he asks Ofqual to 'consult' on the awarding of grades for these also, while stating that 'the government expects that where assessment has already been completed, this will be taken into account when awarding a result... I would expect internal assessment to continue, and to take place remotely, for these qualifications wherever possible.' Mr Williamson also confirms that the BTEC exams we had scheduled for February or March will no longer take place.

In terms of when schools will be expected to submit grades, Mr Williamson states 'it is my view that a teacher's final judgement on a student's grade ought to be as late as possible in the academic year to maximise remaining teaching time and ensure students are motivated to remain engaged in education.'

So, we know more, but by no means enough, and hope that we receive firm guidance and frameworks as soon as possible so that we can make our own plans as to how to support your children, and you, through the process. For now, it is as close to 'business as usual' as we can manage with Year 11 students – please keep encouraging them to engage and work hard.



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We would normally have sent a mock exam results report home this week, but the additional demands on all staff means the processing of this data has taken a little longer than expected. We will aim to send this report home by the end of next week.

As ever, please keep in contact with us and encourage your children to keep engaging, keep submitting, and keep communicating.

We will, as always, get through this together.

Very best wishes, and stay safe

Alasdair Ashcroft  
Headteacher