

24th April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you and your family are coping as best you can in the current circumstances and that you were able to have a safe and enjoyable Easter weekend. At this time we acknowledge the exceptional work and dedication of our frontline key workers at a time of great uncertainty for us all. In particular, we thank all of our ex-students and parents who are currently working as frontline workers to keep people safe and well.

The government directive still exists to remain inside unless we are exercising, travelling for provisions and medical care, or to go to work if we cannot do so at home. Whilst we would hope that the lockdown

Students of Longbenton High School we need your help!



We are hoping to send some cards to people in the Longbenton local community and to nearby residential homes and would like you to help us by writing messages for us to put in the cards.

Here are some ideas of things you could include in your message –

- How are you finding it being off school and staying at home?
- What are you doing for your daily exercise?
- What are you doing to help at home during the lockdown period?
- What are you looking forward to doing most when the lockdown period ends?
- An encouraging message to an older member of the community at this challenging time

Please write a message and email it to school – lhs@longbenton.org.uk

When we receive your message we will put into the card and send it off. We are sure that people in our community would be thrilled to hear from you at this difficult time when many are sadly alone, unable to see their friends and families.

restrictions would come to an end in the near future, at this point in time, the government have not yet published any plans for this to happen or plans to reopen schools.

Student Learning

Teachers have been setting and reviewing work that will involve activities that are organised to fill the equivalent lesson time for the two weeks up to 1st of May. For KS3 that work is available on our website, for KS4 and KS5 via Google Classroom. It is imperative that students are completing the work

set wherever possible as on the return to school, teachers will be planning lessons that move on from that point of learning. For KS4 and KS5, teachers are available via Google Classroom and in KS3 via their Year Leader in Google Classroom for any questions that may arise as a result of the work that is set.

Thinking of Others

We know this is a difficult time for all of us, especially people living on their own or in care homes where they are not allowed visitors. We would love it if you could help us to spread a little joy at this time by asking your children to write a 'Lockdown Letter' or draw a picture that we can then include in cards that we will send to people such as residents in local care homes.

Helping Others

We are now looking to start organising food parcels to support our families most in need as we enter the next stage of lockdown. We know that many household incomes have been cut due to the Covid-19 pandemic and want to do what we can to help. The nearest food bank to our school is Heaton and it is only open one day per week. The usual referrals to food banks and ability to receive food bank vouchers has also been affected by lockdown.

A typical food parcel will include contents for around 3 days of meals at an average value of £25, so we are looking for donations of tinned and dried goods as well as cereals, baby supplies and other basic toiletries and household cleaning goods. We will be setting up a donation bucket just inside the front doors of the school and would ask that if you have anything you can provide, and if going past the school during the day is part of daily exercise, then it is placed there.

PPE Visors

Many of you follow the school on Twitter (@longbentonhs) or on Facebook (search for Longbenton High School) and will have seen what we have done to support our wonderful frontline workers. The level of interest and engagement on this over social media has been unprecedented and I am incredibly proud of what people in our school have done. I would never usually single out an individual (and he will certainly not thank me for doing so) but Mr Charlton, our curriculum leader in Create, has driven this forward with the very willing help and support of others. We have supplied about 700 to date to RVI and Freeman hospitals in Newcastle, St Thomas's in Gosforth as well as local care homes. If you read the comments on our Facebook page you will see that there are many others who really need them (including from as far away as Dorset) and we will be working to meet that need. We have been helped by a £1000 grant from Karbon Homes and a similar donation from a local businessman for materials and to two local companies (Norseal and UKdesignz who are using their laser cutters to help). Many thanks to the LHS staff who have come in to form the production line in assembling them. Well done to all involved; SO proud!

Examinations

In the near future, teachers will be required to provide grades for Year 11 and Year 13 students. Below is a video explaining the process to students and parents produced by OFQUAL, the exam board regulator.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=VXuDOrtJY1Q&feature=emb_logo

OFQUAL have been categorical in their instruction to all schools and teachers: *"Please don't ask your teachers, or anyone else at your school or college, to tell you the grades they will be sending to the exam boards or where they have placed you in the order of students; they will not be allowed to share this with you."*

Information from Northumbria Police

As a force, Northumbria Police are aware that DV/DA will be a major issue for a number of families at this time. Having so few pupils in school raises concerns that those most vulnerable are even more isolated and at risk. If you would like more information or support with Domestic Abuse, please read the attached leaflet.

Online Safety

Revisiting something that I raised before Easter, I would like to re-emphasise the importance of a safe online environment and encourage parents and carers to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites. These are usually free, but often need to be turned on. I am acutely conscious that in these difficult times when everyone's online activity has spiked, young people have become more exposed to the risks posed by the internet.

On our school website there are also links for parents and carers regarding tips on how to keep safe online for each social media platform <https://longbenton.org.uk/parents/e-safety> including:

- [childnet.com](https://www.childnet.com) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Thinkuknow](https://www.thinkuknow.org) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- [ParentZone](https://www.parentzone.org) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations

- [NetAware](#) support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, including a guide to social networks, apps and games

A reminder of the telephone number for the Front Door (North Tyneside Children's Services) is 0345 2000109

Safeguarding and Resources for Mental Health and Wellbeing

We have published a COVID-19 annex to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy which will appear on the policies page of our school website, this has been developed in partnership with North Tyneside Local Authority in response to new government guidelines which can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

In addition to this policy, we would like to remind parents of the leaflet entitled Staying Safe and Well, which includes information and links to services, this can be found on the school website <https://longbenton.org.uk/students/useful-links> . We would also like to highlight some good resources for supporting mental health and wellbeing available through [mentallyhealthyschools](#) which parents may also find helpful.

Contacting School

Although education is now having to take place remotely, it's important for schools, teachers and pupils to maintain professional practice as much as possible. When communicating online with parents and pupils, Longbenton will aim to communicate within school hours as much as possible and would encourage our young people to try and stick to the same timeframe, though we understand that for those of you working shifts, you may need to operate slightly differently.

Our school number is 0191 218 9500 and our email is lhs@longbenton.org.uk should you need to contact us and we remain available Monday to Friday during school hours.

Please continue to stay as safe as you can. All in our school wish all of our parents and students and their friends and families good health and well-being in these difficult times. We urge you to 'stay at home' wherever possible to reduce the risk and momentum of this virus and once again thank you for supporting the school community and your neighbours in these difficult times.

With my very best wishes,

Paul Quinn