



Thursday 11th February 2021

Dear Parents,

Parent Update

As we come to the end of the first half-term of the new calendar year, we wanted to say thank you to our students and families for their ongoing support. This is also an opportunity to reflect on some of the challenges we have faced and the strategies we have put in place to overcome these during this period of national lockdown.

Ask twice

Often, when we ask someone how they are feeling, the response is that they are fine. In most instances this may well be the case. However, as last week was Children's Mental Health Week, we want to encourage you to ask your family and friends twice. We are all so busy trying to juggle the demands of the lockdown but taking the time to press the pause button and asking again, with interest, and being considerate of the environment you are asking in, may help someone to open up for the first time. This is one of the reasons we place such importance on our regular personal mentor meetings, so that we can provide support related to learning but more importantly, check in on how your children are feeling.

Contact with our students

In addition to the in excess of 4,000 direct contact attempts made with students since January, we have held daily assemblies from 9:00am. In addition, last week we rolled out 'live' tutor sessions for all year groups. We have been pleased with how successful these have been in affording students an opportunity to interact with their peers in a supportive environment. These sessions have been well received by students and have also been thoroughly enjoyed by staff. As a reminder, after half-term these sessions take place at 8.45am (prior to the assembly). Students are informed via announcements on ClassCharts. We also put regular updates on our social media platforms to help ensure attendance is as high possible.

It is worth reminding all parents and students that Google Chat rooms exist for each year group across all subjects. These are a great way for students to raise questions or queries that be can be efficiently answered by staff. Importantly, the Google Chat rooms facilitate students supporting each other, as they would do within a normal classroom environment. We strongly recommend that students become members of the appropriate groups for all subjects they study.

Furthermore, we are busy finalising our plans for live seminars for Year 10 and Year 11 across a range of subjects. The purpose of the seminars will be to consolidate the learning from the previous lessons, address any student misconceptions and provide feedback on work that has been submitted. Tomorrow we will be writing directly to students and parents about this initiative which will be launched after the half-term break.

Outstanding education at the heart of the community

Increasing engagement

We are seeing a positive level of engagement from our students across the year groups and appreciate the parental support we have received in helping to ensure this is the case. Most of our students are working incredibly hard to submit work and complete it to the best of their ability. Understandably some parents are struggling to balance their own work commitments with checking in on their child's engagement and quality of work. We also understand there may be other barriers to your child's ability to complete their work, for example, they may be ill on a particular day. If we do contact you in any way such as via text messages or emails to inform you that your child is yet to log onto their ClassCharts for an assembly, live tutor or Google Meet, please be assured it is with the best of intentions to help keep you informed. Any messages, emails or phone calls are all about us working together to support our students and your children. All parents have access to ClassCharts and should be able to track whether their child is receiving achievement points for good quality work and whether work is being submitted or not. Please contact us if you have any issues around accessing or using the ClassCharts on enquiries@tarletonacademy.org to enable us to rectify issues promptly.

Working Remotely and Attendance in School

It is important that parents contact school (01772 812644 or attendance@tarletonacademy.org) on the first day their child is unable to complete their remote learning tasks due to illness, as would be the case if students were attending school as normal. The same applies if students and/or families are required to isolate due to Covid symptoms, are identified as a close contact or there is a positive test result within the household. Strong communication is crucial to ensure we can work together effectively to ensure we can provide support for our families in the best way possible.

We would love all students to be in school. Unfortunately, this cannot be the case at the minute. We are receiving an increasing number of parental requests for students to attend school because they are finding it difficult to work remotely. Sadly, in most cases we must repeat that Lancashire County Council are advising that parents, except those of the children who are vulnerable, should only send children to school where it is not possible to keep them at home.

Ways to Wellbeing



Last week was 'Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Week' and, to further support our work in this area, tomorrow we will be giving all students and their families the opportunity, during the day and over half-term, to be involved in a variety of activities under the headings below:

- Be relaxed!
- Be social!
- Be creative!
- Be active!

We have sent more detailed information regarding this focus day to students and parents earlier this week. Please remember that the tutor session goes live at 8.45am followed by a whole school assembly at 9.00am – don't be late!

As it is used as a platform for many community groups and sports clubs, a small number of parents have requested 'Zoom' to be made accessible through the students' Chromebooks. As we feel that this falls under the 'be social' heading, Zoom is now accessible to be downloaded from the App Store. Please may we remind parents of the need to monitor their child's use and access to all social networking platforms and any internet enabled device. There are several links and tips regarding online safety on our website which may offer support. The National Online Safety parental guides are particularly useful and easy to use <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides> . If there are other apps that you believe would be beneficial as they are educational in nature or will support student wellbeing, please email us at chromebook@tarletonacademy.org .

Challenge Yourself! Read, Watch, Do Activities

We have also developed a number of challenges and a 'Read, Watch, Do Activity' programme that has been shared on our website [here](#) and with students via ClassCharts, to help give students a break from their screens as well as to enrich our remote learning offer. We look forward to hearing how well the students engage with these over the next few weeks. We have had some fantastic entries for the recent Year 7 and Year 8 'Science Challenge', the ongoing 'Around the World Challenge' where we have currently reached Kuwait, and from other creative challenges set by personal mentors to individual students. If you want to share examples of your child's work, please email homelearninglegends@tarletonacademy.org. Students can, of course, also do so themselves. We are rightly very proud of our students' engagement and share many examples under our 'Home Learning Legends' banner on our social media platforms.

The Half-Term Break

We break up for half-term tomorrow, Friday 12th February. School will be closed from Monday 15th February to Friday 19th February (this includes for the provision to critical worker families and vulnerable students). We will return to offering the in-school and remote learning provision from Monday 22nd February. Please use this time to take a break from on screen learning, relax a little and connect with family and friends safely. Simply put, press the 'pause' button, be a little selfish to take time out and look after yourself. When we return, we will work together to build on the momentum created this half-term for the next step of our journey.

As always, thank you for your continued support - take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

M Cunniffe

Mr Cunniffe
Head of School