

7 May 2020

Dear Families,

I am writing to you in advance of the expected announcement from the Prime Minister on Sunday. We expect that there may be some news about the plans for schools returning in some capacity – I will write to you next week with more details about what this will mean for *Dixons Unity* and our community.

I hope that you are still managing with the demands of lockdown and are continuing to find some positives in the situation. I am aware that it has been a time for many families to reconnect and spend more time together in the home as well as helping people to reflect on how we live, work and interact now, and in the future.

I am also acutely aware of the challenges many of you have been facing over the past several weeks and I want to remind you all that we are here for you if you need anything at all. If you need to talk to someone, need financial support, or if you would like to discuss your child's education, please do contact us using the details at the end of this letter. I understand that it can sometimes be difficult to reach out to us; especially if it relates to finances, food or provisions. However, we have had an overwhelming number of donations which have helped us provide supplies to so many of our families. We can continue to do this for those who need it. All requests and subsequent donations are done on a confidential basis. Please contact us if you would like us to help you.

I would also like to thank everyone who has kindly donated any items to the academy as well as the Vulnerable Citizens Organisation in Armley, who have worked with us to provide support in our community.

Year 11 Grade Submission

I will outline details of our approach to this in a separate letter to all Year 11 families. Please take the time to read this if you are affected.

Students working from home

The academy will continue to be open to children of key workers and those who are deemed to be vulnerable or have individual needs, regardless of any new measures that are introduced to exit lockdown. Beyond this, we will wait until next week before making any key decisions. I have been working to prepare a plan for more students returning to school and I will be able to share more of this with you next week.

In the meantime, we will continue to email work to your child to enable them to work from home. If your child is yet to access work because they cannot get on their email, please phone the academy or email info@dixonsua.com. We will reissue their email address and arrange for their password to be reset. Please remember that we are happy for students to complete work on paper if they cannot complete it on their mobile device or tablet.

Online learning resources also continue to be developed – I would recommend *BBC Bitesize* in addition to the work we are providing through platforms such as *ActiveLearn*, *Hegarty Maths*, *Seneca* and *Oak National Academy*. Please contact your class teacher via email if you have any issue with the work they are setting.

While it is important for your child to maintain involvement in their education, I am most concerned about their wellbeing. Please do support them in managing their anxieties about completing work and continuing their education. I would recommend that you encourage your child to contact classroom teachers for issues with completing work, or their Head of Year / Assistant Head of Year if they need to discuss how they are feeling. Although most of our young people are not in our building, we remain committed to them and their health and wellbeing and will continue to support them in any way we can.



Government laptop scheme

We have also been given information about the Government laptops and router scheme. We have been granted a limited number of laptops to the whole of the Trust, which will be allocated to students in Year 10. I apologise that we cannot expand this out to include more students; however, we have been awarded fewer than 200 laptops for all of the schools in the Trust. Over the next week, my team will be contacting all students in Year 10 who qualify under Government guidelines for issuing the equipment. We will need to know what IT facilities are currently available in the home. We will then submit this information to the Trust in the hope of securing laptops for students who need them most. These laptops will then be 'loaned' to these individuals for the rest of their time at the academy. The laptops will remain property of the academy and must be returned before the student leaves school next year.

Free School Meals

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, the Government voucher scheme will continue to run via parental email. Ms Rothenburg is also printing and posting vouchers to families who cannot access email. If you are having issues with this process, please contact us to let us know. We can deliver a food parcel in lieu of the vouchers, until we are able to support you in redeeming them.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

We are still operating our safeguarding and child protection provision. However, we are also aiming to complete a check in phone call with all students and families over the next couple of weeks.

If you have a concern or issue, please contact the academy safeguarding team, using the details below, ring the academy or contact me directly. We will address serious issues immediately. You can also call Social Services if you have concerns about a child on 0113 2224403 (between 9-5pm).

If you need to report a crime, or have an emergency situation, please contact the Police on 101 (or dial 999 if there is a threat of immediate harm).

Your Health and Well Being

I know that this may be a difficult time for some of you; especially when you are unable to leave the house, or are unable to speak to other adults on a daily basis. If you have any concerns about yourself, or someone you know, please contact the academy or use one of the emails below to contact me, or a member of my team. We may be able to help. We may also be able to refer you to organisations who can give you the support and guidance you need.

Contact with the Academy

I will continue to write and send text messages to communicate with you. Please remember that you may receive calls from academy staff on 'no caller ID' numbers. If you need to speak to someone, you can call reception during office hours on 0113 2630110. Outside of office hours, please use the following emails to communicate with our teams:

For general enquiries: info@dixonsua.com

Child Protection / Safeguarding issues: Ms Rothenburg - grothenburg@dixonsua.com / pgrayson@dixonsua.com

Curriculum: Ms Burmo-Rothenburg – KBurmo-Rothenburg@dixonsua.com

Serious concerns: Mr Carr – dcarr@dixonsua.com

I hope to be able to communicate with you soon about our exit strategies. Please continue to take care of each other and look after yourselves.

Best wishes from me and all at *Dixons Unity*.

Yours sincerely



Danny Carr



