

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

**COVID19 – Parent Update 27.03.2020**

The Spring Term is coming to an end, and it has certainly been a term like no other! I have been heartened by your wonderful messages of support and encouragement, and by staff and students' resolve to keep the learning momentum going through these unprecedented times. Adversity certainly brings about resourcefulness and there have been great examples of this, including:

- The English Team starting a virtual book group, reading Frankenstein and recording a staff read through of An Inspector Calls;
- Mr Carter and Miss Vallance preparing to issue scripts and casting on-line for the next component of the BTEC Drama course;
- Ms Richards using Kerboodle to enable Year 10 students to record exam practice role play in Spanish;
- Mrs Adams using an Isca History Instagram page to share resources on Google Classroom.

To name but a few.

I was also delighted to hear that over 70 students have already signed up to Mrs Hughes' Studio 71 virtual Art workshop on Google Classrooms, accessing a range of activities and resources to boost mental health and wellbeing. In these times of uncertainty and prolonged isolation, I would encourage all students to take these opportunities, and to contribute their own ideas about ways of helping ourselves and each other. Join in and keep connected!

**Easter Holidays**

As we enter the Easter holidays, with the very well-timed arrival of good weather, I would like to remind our students that this is an opportunity for you to rest, away from the daily home learning in which you have all engaged so remarkably well. This is also a time for our staff to take a well-earned rest, so if you have any pressing queries, please feel free to use the email contacts provided but keeping communications to essential matters only if possible. Please also bear with us if responses are not as prompt as they have been up until now.

We understand that Year 11 students, in particular, may wish to remain focused on their GCSE work to be prepared for whatever may lie ahead, and our team will continue to support them throughout. For those students who intend to carry on with their studies in the future, we are working with local providers and colleges and we hope to provide some focused bridging work for you after Easter.

Quiet time at home over the holidays is also a great opportunity to read and we would encourage you all to make the most of this time. Obviously getting hold of books is less straight forward at present and below is a link to the teen section of the free audible books, which may be helpful:

[https://stories.audible.com/discovery/enterprise-discovery-21122354011?ref=adbl\\_ent\\_anon\\_ds\\_ds\\_dccs\\_sbtp-0-3](https://stories.audible.com/discovery/enterprise-discovery-21122354011?ref=adbl_ent_anon_ds_ds_dccs_sbtp-0-3)

For Year 7 and 8 students, you can also still quiz from an audio book. When you come to quiz on an Accelerated Reader book, you will now be asked the following question:

How did you read the book?

- a. I was read to
- b. I read with someone
- c. I read by myself

If you have listened to an audio book – please select option a – ‘I was read to’.

Sparx homework will be set as normal throughout the Easter break for those who wish to access this.

### Summer Term

Although we are yet to receive a government update on plans relating to school closures, we are not, at this time, anticipating to return to normal provision after the Easter break. Isca Academy will, therefore, continue to offer provision to the children of key workers only as we have done for this last week, until further notice. **Please remember that the School is only open for those children who absolutely need to attend and if your child has, or develops, a continuous cough or a temperature, you must ensure that they do not attend school.** If your circumstances change over the holidays and you need your child to start attending school after Easter, please contact Mrs Alison Moxey on [amoxey@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:amoxey@iscaexeter.co.uk).

The Term 3 Knowledge Organiser booklets for Years 7 to 10 are now available electronically from the school website and via Google Classroom. Due to current circumstances, the booklets will not be made available in paper copy on this occasion. If, however, you are not in a position to access the electronic versions, please contact us and we will arrange for a printed document to be posted out to you. Students will be required to use the Knowledge Organisers in the same way as they have during the Spring Term. Indeed, now more so than ever, students need to build a strong, independent knowledge base in readiness for their return to school. Our team will be on hand from the start of term to answer any email queries that students may have about the new KOs.

We have also added to our website a summary of general on-line resources and activities, which you and your child may find helpful.

### Update on GCSE's

Earlier this month Gavin Williamson, the Department for Education and OFQUAL, announced that GCSE, A and AS Level examinations would be cancelled owing to the challenges presented by the coronavirus (details [here](#)). We understand that this announcement will have caused some anxiety and frustration amongst parents and students, but the school is working closely with the exam boards to ensure a fair outcome for all our students. Whilst we are awaiting further information, please be aware of the following:

- Year 11 students will have a GCSE grade calculated which reflects their performance as fairly as possible.
- Teachers will have the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of the GCSE grade.
- Teachers will receive guidance on how to formulate GCSE grades, at some point in the future (which will include mock data, classroom work, etc).
- Year 11 students will receive their ‘calculated grades’ before the end of July.
- Gavin Williamson stated that “this year’s students do not face a systematic disadvantage as a consequence of these extraordinary circumstances”.

As soon as further information is provided by OFQUAL, we will communicate this to parents and staff. However, Isca Academy staff are already working hard to ensure our students secure the strong academic outcomes that the school has enjoyed over recent years and those which the students rightly deserve

after all of their hard work. We would ask that all students keep hold of all of their books, coursework and folders as these will be used as evidence when teachers submit their grades.

### **Year 8 Options**

Can I please remind all Year 8 students to confirm their option choices by no later than Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April by completing the form on the link below.

[Year 8 Options Form](#)

This is essential in helping us plan next year's staffing levels and timetable. If your child needs any guidance to help finalise their choices, please do not hesitate to contact their teachers, tutor or head of year.

### **Coronavirus update - Staying Healthy**

Although the government guidelines are for social distancing, here is a link to how you can still stay healthy and enjoy some fresh air, safely [here](#)

There is also a link to some useful support for families whilst your children are at home <https://familyresource.eci.org.uk/toolkit-for-families-in-isolation/>

### **Safeguarding**

Can I remind you that if you have any safeguarding concerns now or during the Easter holidays, you should contact our Safeguarding Lead, Kate Campbell-Bellis on: [kcampbell.bellis@iscaexeter.co.uk](mailto:kcampbell.bellis@iscaexeter.co.uk)

Any urgent safeguarding or child protection matters should be directed to the Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) directly on 0345 1551071.

Should you have an immediate concern for the safety or welfare of a child, please call 999 or report any non-emergency concerns to the police via 101.

### **Next Steps**

We will write to you again on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April to update you further on arrangements for the Summer Term, including any amendments to scheduled events in the school calendar. We hope to be, at that time, clearer as to national plans for education in the coming weeks and months.

In the meantime, please take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

**Miss Aimee Mitchell, Headteacher**