



Dear Parents and Carers,

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on a few matters, to reassure you and to remind you how we are providing support to your child and to you during this difficult time. The Prime Minister's address to the nation on Sunday evening may have raised expectations about a return to school for your child. As we now know, this may not be for quite some time yet.

I have been looking at the guidelines for the phased return of students and my senior team and I will use the next few weeks to work through a solution as to how we will work in school.

### **THE LATEST NEWS ON A RETURN TO SCHOOL**

The Prime Minister announced that from 1 June at the earliest, primary pupils may be able to begin going back into school in stages, beginning with Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. For secondary pupils facing exams next year (our current Year 10) it is expected that *some* will get some time with their teachers before the summer holidays.

What this means right now is that MHA will continue to provide an in-school provision for those children of key workers who are unable to be supervised and supported other than in school and, in addition, we will also continue to provide an in-school provision for those vulnerable students who have already been identified.

As you I know, the NHS is our sponsor and we continue to be incredibly proud of that fact. I would like to thank all parents and carers for your support, patience and diligence in keeping yourselves and your families safe, supporting the NHS and supporting your child with their education.

As mentioned already, my senior staff and I are already planning for an eventual return to school for children. You can rest assured that we will look to change systems and the way we operate and teach in the short term to make sure that you have confidence in children and staff working safely. I will publish details about these adjustments nearer the time that children (our current Year 10) will be expected to return to school.

### **LAPTOPS FOR STUDENTS**

We have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that every child at MHA who does not have access to a laptop will soon receive a school laptop. This includes children who apparently do not qualify for the incorrect, estimated government number of laptops.

All of our school laptops are being reconfigured for home use. Many laptops have already been loaned out, prioritising Year 10 students as they are nearer their GCSE exams next year than any other year group.



By the end of this week there will be no laptops in school as all will have been loaned out. We are determined to ensure your child does not fall behind. No child will miss out.

### **SCHOOL WORK AND SUPPORT FOR YOUR CHILD**

Most work is now set online. With regards to school work you will know we have a system that has been in use for several weeks now where your child's form tutor is in regular contact with you. They check that your child has been completing the work that has been set and they also support them where needed to complete this work. I have had some really positive feedback from parents and carers about this with some of you actually really enjoying the experience of supporting your child educationally!

Children should be very clear that schoolwork is not an option. I am directing your child to use the resources and complete the work we set and to visit the various online resources on a daily basis.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my staff, supporting your child, be it the catering team, the safeguarding and pastoral teams, teachers, form tutors and support staff. They go about their work in school or remotely with the highest level of commitment you could wish for. A brilliant team effort from all of them and all of you!

### **FREE SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE**

If you are a family whose child is eligible for free school meals, you will know that the national voucher scheme is up and running. It took time and whilst that was delayed we provided a voucher system to support you where there was a slow response from central government. If you are having issues with this scheme, or facing particular hardship, then please contact school and we will look to support you at this very difficult time in your lives.

### **ONLINE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

In addition to the work that your child's teachers are providing through Google Classroom and SAM Learning there are a number of online resources available to support home learning. A summary is provided below.

#### Oak National Academy online classroom and resource hub

This resource offers 180 video lessons each week for schools to use, across a broad range of subjects. The lessons cover children in Reception through to Year 10 and are free to use by both teachers and young people. The Oak National Academy can be accessed here:  
<https://www.thenational.academy>

#### BBC Bitesize

The BBC has an education package across TV and online, featuring celebrities and teachers, helping to keep children learning at home and supporting parents. BBC Bitesize can be accessed here:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

The Department for Education has released advice to help parents who are have a child with special educational needs or disabilities. That guidance can be accessed here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>



## HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD IN STAYING SAFE ONLINE?

There is support available to keep your child safe online. Below are some useful links to help parents and carers:

- Thinkuknow (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- Internet matters (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- Parent info (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- LGfL (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- Net-aware (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)
- Let's Talk About It (support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation)
- UK Safer Internet Centre (tips, advice, guides)

## SUPPORTING YOUR WELL-BEING, YOUR CHILDS WELL-BEING AND YOUR FAMILY WELL-BEING

Social connections, alongside exercise, sleep, diet and routine, remain important protective factors for mental health.

Public Health England's Rise Above platform supports young people. The Department of Health and Social Care is providing £5 million of additional funding to support mental health charities to increase their provision for adults and children at this time.

Social isolation, reduced exercise, and bereavement may affect children's wellbeing in this period. Resources to promote and support children and young people's mental wellbeing include:

- MindEd educational resources for adults about children and young people's mental health, which is relevant for parents and carers as well as volunteers, teachers, and other professionals working with children
- The Every Mind Matters platform which supports looking after your own and other's mental health
- All NHS mental health trusts are setting up 24/7 helplines, and seeking to use digital and virtual channels, to continue delivering support during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

There is a long way to go yet until we return to what we knew as normal. Try not to be disheartened and please rest assured that we are trying to bridge the gap in learning as much as we can.

Finally, I wanted to say take good care of yourselves and respect the social distancing measures that still remain in place. Remember to step on to your doorsteps on Thursday evenings to applaud our amazing NHS teams and those key workers, including my staff, that are helping to support us all through these very difficult times.

Best wishes



**K Green**  
**Principal**

