

9 February 2021

TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parents/Carers

As we approach the final week of this most extraordinary half-term, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and the comments of gratitude and thanks to all the teaching staff who are working hard to deliver live and engaging lessons.

I would also like to thank our learners, all of whom have shown tremendous resilience and determination. The overall engagement of learners has been exceptional and this is demonstrated through their fantastic attendance and the quality of the work they have submitted this half-term.

I am very keen to gather your thoughts and suggestions to help us to shape how we continue to evolve the remote learning provision to make it as effective and accessible as possible. Therefore, I would be immensely grateful if both parents/carers and learners could complete the short questionnaires below:

Parent/carer questionnaire

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/parents-survey-02-2020>

Learner questionnaire

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/learner-survey-02-2020>

With regard to the full re-opening of schools, the Prime Minister announced that the **earliest** date upon which schools could expect to return to 'normal' operation and opening would be 8 March 2021. This is due to be reviewed on 22 February 2021 and as soon as any updated information is released we will communicate it to you. We are eager to have our learners back in the academy as soon as it is safe to do so and in the meantime we will focus on delivering the very highest standard of education provision possible during this period.

Those of you who have sons and daughters in Y11 and Y13 will know that the government's consultation on the arrangements for assessment closed last Friday. The DfE and Ofqual will now reflect upon the thousands of responses that have been submitted nationally and draw up the formal guidance that will be issued to schools. Although we do not have an official timescale for this process, it is expected to take several weeks; we will be in touch with learners and their families as soon as any further announcements are made. In the meantime, it is crucial that all Y11 and Y13 learners focus on their next steps and continue to work hard to gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful on the pathways which follow on from this year.

We are currently living through challenging times and now perhaps more than ever looking after our mental health and wellbeing is of paramount importance to us all. The mental health and wellbeing link on the academy's website <https://jcb-academy.com/mental-health-and-wellbeing/> will signpost you to lots of resources that can offer you and your families the best support and guidance. Our pastoral team will continue to be available for you and learners should you need to contact us.

We have received comments about the amount of screen time for both learners and staff and your comments/suggestions about this via the questionnaire will be very useful. As an initial action though, we will take a break from screens this Friday, 12 February 2021 from 12:50 pm. The aim is to avoid screen time, to give learners and staff a break and to allow them to do something to promote their wellbeing: no screen time, no online learning - instead go out, read a book, bake a treat. Learners are encouraged to enjoy themselves and to let us know how they spent their time by taking a photograph and sending it to Mr Caine (p.caine@jcbacademy.com). This means that learners who are studying at the academy on Friday will leave early so that they also have the opportunity to enjoy no screen time. The buses will therefore depart at 1:00 pm on 12 February 2021.

Thank you once again for the way in which you are supporting your sons and daughters with their learning and for your patience; I fully appreciate the challenges posed by the current lockdown restrictions. If you have any concerns or require any support, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your son's/daughter's learning mentor.

I wish you and your families a safe and restful half-term break.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J McGuirk
Principal