



# KING JAMES'S SCHOOL

## KNARESBOROUGH

### King James's School COVID19 - Update for Parents - 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This will be my final update for you before the Easter break. There are quite a few topics to cover as we come to the end of what has been a tumultuous few weeks for all of us. I know that the stay at home message has been tough for everyone. I am also aware from my own friends and relatives that there is some serious economic impact for many families and concerns about jobs. There is also the challenge, for some, of serious health issues, along with children accessing their learning at home. It is taking continued resilience from all of us to keep going through this and we appreciate your support with the online learning.

#### **Online learning:**

I'll try not to repeat my previous messages but please remember there is a balance to be struck. **Don't allow the stress of online learning to add strain to family relationships** in an already difficult situation. However, please do keep our young people engaged, little and often is the key. We are monitoring the online learning carefully. The first week saw 1619 user logons to Its Learning (students and staff), very few students have not logged on. There are over 10,000 logons per day and students spend an average of 28 minutes on each session. Logons peak at around 10.00 am each day and the majority of students seem to work through to 3 or 4 p.m.

We have been, overall, delighted with the quality of work coming through. We are learning too; teachers are becoming more skilled at knowing what tasks to set, how to upload short videos and how to make sure students can understand the work. For **Year 10 and Year 12** there are greater challenges as we need to think about how we teach them new, and challenging, content, rather than just keep them ticking over. Please be assured that we are working on constantly improving the online learning experience. We held an online forum with our heads of department yesterday to troubleshoot some of the problems, for example, the best way to get the Year 10 mock exam results back to students with high quality feedback.

Please remember that technical help is available at [its@king-james.co.uk](mailto:its@king-james.co.uk)

Students should use the chat room in Its Learning only for chat about school work, they should **avoid using direct teacher email where possible** (especially outside of normal school hours).

It is important to note that teachers may set long term projects or tasks which students can continue over the Easter break but **we will not be setting work through Easter** in the way we have in the last two weeks. Long term projects are just that, projects done over time, students don't have to do them all at once. Although we all cannot go out much at the moment teachers, pupils and parents all need some down time.

#### **Year 8:**

At this time of year we would normally be running the Year 8 'mini options' process. If you are a parent of a Year 8 pupil please watch out for important letters and communications about this process. Contact Mr Berry if you need any questions answering about this.

## Year 9:

We would normally be sending you a letter at this time of year about sex and relationships education taking place in PSHCE lessons and there is also a change in the law on sex and relationships education from September 2020. This will now be online learning so we will be sending this letter out in any case.

## Year 11 and Year 13.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March is the likely date of a statement from Ofqual** about how teachers and schools will contribute to the exam board process for awarding the A Level and GCSE grades. I will communicate separately about this before the end of the week. It's unlikely that we will have had time to discuss the implications of the Ofqual announcement thoroughly in school but we will be able to give you links to their website and give you an indication of our intentions. **Mr O'Hara and the Sixth Form team will keep Y13 in the loop with UCAS announcements.**

One key point is to please stick to my earlier request that you **don't email individual teachers about grades**. We will come up with a whole school approach. It is likely that this will take most of April and into May as there will be a lengthy process of moderating grades across and within schools.

In terms of Y11 work, it is very commendable that many year 11 students have kept doing their GCSE work in the last two weeks. We should be able to give clearer advice on what year 11 should do after we have the Ofqual statement.

Once we know more about the Ofqual statement we will most likely ask Y11, if they are going on to our Sixth Form, to start transition work to keep them ticking over in the summer term and to prepare for starting their A Level courses. More on that after Easter.

## Links

There are three new documents that we have put on the website which I hope you find useful.

- One is some contact details for agencies who can help with counselling and mental health issues: <http://www.king-james.co.uk/common/images/downloads/202042105112-Support-contacts.pdf>
- There's a guide for younger children about Coronavirus: <http://www.king-james.co.uk/common/images/downloads/202042105014-Childrens-Guide-to-Coronavirus.pdf>
- There's a handy guide for parents about coping with school closures: <http://www.king-james.co.uk/common/images/downloads/202042105620-Parents-guide-to-coping-with-school-closures.pdf>

I hope that you have found this update useful. I hope that it will not be too long before the worst of this crisis passes and we can look forward to getting our school community back together again. In the meantime, take care and do get in touch with us if you need to.

Carl Sugden

Headteacher