



KING JAMES'S SCHOOL

KNARESBOROUGH

18th June 2020

There is a video version of this letter on the Covid-19 section of our website.

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'd like to start, once again, by thanking you for your support and patience. There is a lot of controversy out there at the moment about what schools should be doing. I believe that there is a lack of a clear national education strategy and too many unknowns about what we should do next. We are currently trying to look after key worker children, set online lessons and bring Years 10 and 12 back into school with very strict health and safety protocols. It is tremendously difficult to plan and deliver in this environment but I can assure you we are doing our best to deliver as much as we can with the time and resource available. Running a school with 1500 students and 200 staff, in normal times, is now starting to look easy in comparison to the ad hoc nature of what we are doing currently.

Key Stage 3 Online Learning: we are aware that pupils in Years 7 to 9 have not had the advantage of some face to face contact with their teachers. Some of them, understandably, have found it hard to stay engaged and motivated with online work. In the next few weeks we are planning to bring in more interactivity in the form of some video masterclasses and project work. We will try to freshen up what they are doing. Watch out for consent forms being sent out for participation in video lessons. These are necessary from a safeguarding and data protection point of view.

Key Stage 3 Recognition & Rewards: we are asking teachers for nominations for students who have really engaged with their online work and we will be finding an appropriate way of acknowledging this and saying thank you.

In terms of catching up we know that we have a mountain to climb but I am confident that, in the long term, we can make up for lost time with Key Stage 3. If we can get going again in the autumn term with energy, smart teaching, good use of homework and careful assessment we can recover our curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9.

Year 10: We have had the first 'quartile' of Year 10 back in school today for English and maths. Attendance is excellent and they were really motivated to be back in a classroom again.

Year 12: The attitude and commitment of Year 12 this week has been excellent as they were the first group of students back to 'normal' lessons since lockdown. Mr O'Hara is maintaining all Year 12 communications. As he said this week, we can take them through two full cycles of lessons which takes us to the 10th July. We will pause there for Year 12 as we will need that final week to work with other year groups.

The Unknowns: There are many unknowns as we go forward, and you, as parents, will want to know what the future holds for our young people. The most obvious question is what will schooling look like in September? I don't want to over simplify things but the only way to run the school at

full capacity is for the current social distancing rules not to be in force, and for all of the school staff to be available for work again. Anything less than that that will compromise what we can deliver.

The other key thing that we need to know more about is what will the exams and assessment look like for GCSE and A Level in 2021, given the students have missed so much teaching? We need to know this quickly because that determines what we teach and how we assess pupils in the remaining 30 weeks of their GCSE and A Level courses.

Please do keep monitoring your emails and the website as we will continue to communicate important information as plans develop.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CA Sugden', with a small flourish at the end.

Mr CA Sugden
Headteacher