



The Matthew Arnold School

Part of the Bourne Education Trust



6th January 2021

Dear Students

Spring 21

I want to start by wishing you all a happy new year. I know it may seem a bit inappropriate with us going back into lockdown because of the rapid spread of coronavirus. Year 11s in particular may well be wondering what there is to be happy about in terms of their education. In my mind it is more important than ever that we look after ourselves and each other. It is easy to say and much harder to do, but one of the ways to manage it is to seek out and celebrate the positive wherever possible.

For most of you, then, you are looking at the prospect of learning from home for the foreseeable future. For some of you this will sound familiar, for others less so. Whatever the case, this lockdown is going to be different in one major respect - we have done this before, and that experience means that things should go much more smoothly and much more effectively. This is how it is going to look:

- You will receive your education through the Microsoft Teams platform, which you have access to through your school email. A 'How To' guide will be sent to you and posted on the school website.
- A timetable of your lessons will be sent to you - there will be between 4 and 5 lessons a day, and the week will include two tutor sessions and one wellbeing session. Your head of year will be writing to you offering support and outlining our expectations for your attendance to and participation in lessons
- Most of your lessons will be 'live' - you will be invited to a team for each subject. There may be times when we give you a pre-recorded lesson or set work for you to do, but we don't expect this to happen often
- You do need to have a device which helps you to make the most of your lessons. A phone does work, but it is not ideal. There are lots of ways we can support you with this, as well as with internet access. Your parents have been asked to let us know about this, but you can also contact your head of year. After all, you probably know better than they do what is needed
- A new tab on the website 'Spring 21' will be the place you go to for information - for example your timetable - it isn't ready yet but will be live by the weekend

The next message I want to give is aimed mostly at new students and year 7 students, but it is worth reading anyway. You need to know how to log in to your school email and how Microsoft Teams works. We can help you so that you feel really confident, but only if you tell us! Please don't worry if there are problems to begin with - you will not get into trouble - but don't give up. Contact your tutor or head of year. Ask your parents or carers to ring school to leave a message for your head of year if you can't email them.

The same goes if you are feeling unhappy, stressed or overwhelmed. Don't go quiet - tell us. It might be much easier to talk to someone at school than to your family, especially if they are feeling stressed themselves.

This next message is aimed at older students, particularly Y11 students. We are NOT going to forget you and focus on the younger students because exams have been cancelled. It is now more important than ever that your 'attendance' and focus in class is the best it can be. Remember Mr Lawrence's and Mrs Moore's assembly in September? If your teachers had to grade you, what would they give? There is still plenty of time to show us what you can do and what you deserve to get in the summer, but you need to make sure you show us - there is no doubt that we will be asked to give plenty of evidence!

To all of you, we will support you. Yes, our expectations of you are as high as they always were, but we do understand what this means. We know that until you get into a new routine, lots of you are feeling nervous, stressed, angry, demotivated. It is now not summer now, and getting out to enjoy the sunshine while we are exercising is not an option. Please don't make this a reason to break rules. We are in lockdown and you should be at home. Our school community did incredibly well in terms of low numbers of positive cases because we all pulled together even when it was frustrating and tough to do. We can do it again.

I have told your parents that I won't make promises I can't keep. I won't lie to you either - things are not going to be easy. Life seems very unfair. It is. I can't promise year 11 students that the way their qualifications will be worked out will be fair. What I can promise is that I will be honest with you about new developments, and that your teachers and I will do everything we can to put you all in the best possible position for the future, whatever that looks like.

Your next email will come from Mr Elliott (teaching timetable) and your head of year (support and expectations).

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Gould', written in a cursive style.

Mary Gould

Headteacher