



27th March 2020

Coronavirus Update 9

Dear Parents / Guardians

We have arrived at the end of term in what by anyone's definition has been a very long week! We have all had to adjust to so many changes in the course of the last few days and I am so proud of the maturity and sense of responsibility that members of the Halliford community have shown in the face of significant challenge.

Remote learning

We have all adjusted to now being part of a Halliford remote learning community and I am incredibly grateful for the words of support that you have sent through. It has not been easy and there is much for us to learn from this week. It is clear that at this stage it is unlikely that term will recommence on site on the 21st April. With that in mind I have prepared a survey to gather some feedback on our response this week to enable us to look at ways to improve our offering over the course of the summer term. We continue to want to keep things as normal as possible and to keep lessons running without too much disruption. As we move forward we will be looking at how we can use technology further but please bear with us as we all learn new skills to enable us to offer the best of outcomes to your sons and daughters. The survey will be open up until Friday 3rd April 2020.

Assembly

We have recorded the end of term assembly but there is a great deal to celebrate and we've tried to inject a little variety into the videos. As soon as these are available I will send a link to your son / daughter's email address. As these videos contain names of members of our community for Safeguarding reasons I have not shared these videos publically and would be grateful if you did not seek to pass them on. I'm afraid that despite our best endeavours the sound quality hasn't been the greatest and so there are some places where it is a little difficult to hear, but I hope you get the general flavour.

I will arrange to circulate a list of those receiving various awards early next week.

Public Examinations

Unfortunately, the Government have still not released information for those students in Year 11 and the Upper Sixth and our thoughts go out to them at this time. The latest statement from Ofqual is as follows:

We are rapidly working up plans to implement [the arrangements the Secretary of State for Education has set out for exams this summer](#) and, with exam boards and teaching bodies, are making considerable progress.

Students understandably want reassurance, and teachers urgently need to know what to do, and when. We expect to publish detailed information about the process and timetable which will apply this summer next week. This will include the steps we would like teachers to follow and more detailed guidance on how to consider the full range of evidence they will have available when submitting their assessment grades. We are talking to teaching representatives to make sure that what we are planning is manageable and appropriate, so that students, parents, carers and teachers can have confidence in the approach.

We will outline by Easter the process we will follow to make sure grades are fair across schools and colleges, as well as our proposals for appeals. We will also say more as soon as possible about the arrangements for additional exams in the new academic year.

We want to reassure students waiting for news that we are doing everything we can to make sure they are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances.

Please be assured that I will be carefully monitoring this situation and that we will be in touch as soon as we have further clarification on this matter.

How to take care this holiday

There is no doubt that this is going to be a school holiday quite unlike any other. There is lots of advice available for how to manage this time together and I just wanted to share a few ideas that have come through on articles that I have read in the hope that these may be useful.

1. Develop a routine – even though it is the Holiday period a sense of routine can really help and enables students to know what they should be doing. Three weeks with limited time outdoors is a tough call for anyone, let alone a teenager!
2. Stay in touch with friends and family, use the time to connect with people and share your good news but also ask for help when things get tough. I'm always happy to hear from any families at any time and we'd love to share your good news stories on our social media platforms.
3. Try to engage in some regular exercise. Make it fun and have a go at some of the PE Department challenges and don't forget to post your videos on our Twitter pages – after all you can't be any worse than me!
4. Ask those you care about if they need any help – support your friends and family.
5. Challenge yourself each day and try to do something to stimulate your brain, be that a puzzle or a new activity. Make time to try new hobbies and activities.
6. Limit your screen time, we know it's not healthy and you need to try and make sure you get a sense of balance each day. Try to build in off-line time between on-line times.
7. Try to limit the amount of news that you read. Take a few trusted sources such as the BBC and don't be tempted to read everything – remember the internet is full of fake news that can just add to any feelings of anxiety.
8. Try to get into a habit of regular sleep and make sure that you get enough of it.
9. Eat a healthy and well balanced diet – now is a great time to get involved in helping parents to prepare food and learn how to cook!
10. Make time to be calm and look after yourself and schedule some time just to be alone and to relax.
11. If you are struggling at one point don't be afraid to ask for help, there are lots of people happy to support and that includes your friends and even your Headmaster!

Keep in touch

I am aware that a number of families are currently struggling with the effects of the virus and to all of you we send our very best wishes at this time. Please do let me know if any of your children happen to develop symptoms and we will do anything we can to support you as families. The easiest way to be in touch at this time is through email to headmaster@hallifordschool.co.uk I will continue to be in touch if there are any other changes over the course of the Easter Holiday but hope that you will appreciate that I need to follow my own advice too and make time for a rest as well so please forgive me if any reply takes longer than expected.

Finally, can I thank you all once again for the support and words of encouragement that you have offered over this time. It is a tremendous privilege to lead such a cohesive and warm-hearted community. I hope that you will all be able to stay well and to look after one another over the coming weeks. Please also try to find space to spend some time relaxing and I look forward to being in touch again before the start of the summer term.

Keep safe, keep well!

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J.H.', with a flourish underneath.