

5th January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: National Lockdown and Immediate Switch to Online Learning

As you will now undoubtedly be aware, the Prime Minister addressed the nation yesterday evening and announced further tightening of restrictions as part of the ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic and particularly the development of the new strain.

As part of this, all schools in England have been told to switch to online learning with immediate effect and to close onsite provision to all students, with the exception of the small school for vulnerable students and the children of key workers. Further details are included in this letter regarding access to online learning, small school, free school meals and the arrangements for external examinations.

As teachers, asking students to stay at home once again is far from our preferred option as we know that young people benefit so much from being in the Academy; however, it is crucial that we once again all play our respective parts to support the national fight against coronavirus. Please be reassured that WMG Academy remains entirely committed to supporting our students at this time and will continue to go above and beyond in maximising their access to education, albeit remotely.

We as a staff received the news of school closure at the same time as parents. Some of our staff are therefore in a similar position to many parents with younger children and will also at present be considering how to manage their own childcare and, in the short term, this may impact their delivery of live online learning. Similarly, some staff will be required to support the upcoming January examination series. We ask that parents are mindful of this and bear with us this week as everyone adjusts to the new restrictions.

Online and Remote Learning Reminders

We last wrote to you on 31st December 2020 detailing the temporary arrangements for online learning during a staggered return to school. The arrangements below now take the place of those and are as follows:

- All students will be able to access online learning from home via Google Classroom and Google Meet which can both be accessed via RM Unify.
- Please remember that there are no online lessons for pastoral tutor times or enrichment sessions.
- We originally cancelled all online lessons for Years 10 and 12 on Friday 8th January to allow for staff to access lateral flow testing. This is no longer necessary and lessons will take place for **all** year groups on Friday.
- Please be reminded of the adjusted day structure below to facilitate online lessons:

WMG Academy for Young Engineers, Chelmsley Road, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5FD

Online [45-minute lessons]	
Period 1	08.35 – 09.20
Period 2	09.30 – 10.15
Pastoral	
Break	
Period 3	11.10 – 11.55
Period 4	12.05 – 12.50
Lunch	
Period 5	13.35 – 14.20
Period 6	14.30 – 15.15
Break*	
Period 7*	15.40 – 16.25

* Sessions identified with the asterisk do not take place on Monday or Friday

Small School for Vulnerable Students and the Children of Key Workers

Small school provision for vulnerable students and the children of key workers will continue for as long as there is demand and until schools fully reopen. We had planned this provision as part of our staggered return and parents of vulnerable students have already been written to inviting them to join small school.

Parents who are key workers, as defined by the UK Government, are also able to request a place for their child at small school if they haven't done so already. Parents are asked to book a place by emailing solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk.

For safeguarding reasons, we are actively monitoring attendance at small school and parents are reminded of their responsibility to notify the Academy if their child will not be attending small school when they are expected to.

Please note that students attending small school should bring a packed lunch as canteen facilities are not available on site.

Free School Meals

WVG Academy will continue to provide for students in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). The previously available scheme run by the UK Government is no longer available; however, the Academy will continue to provide parents with vouchers. These will be sent directly to parents and we anticipate that they will be valid in local supermarkets. Students attending small school who are in receipt of FSM should use the vouchers to purchase packed lunches as no onsite catering will be available.

Queries regarding free school meal vouchers should be directed to finance@wmgacademy.org.uk.

External Examinations – January Series

At the time of writing, the Department for Education have confirmed that the January examination series **will go ahead as planned**. We are awaiting further information from the DfE and the relevant exam boards and we will continue to update you as this situation develops but strongly encourage students to continue to prepare for these examinations. This examination series affects some students in Years 11 and 13.

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External Examinations – Summer Series

We are sure that you will have also heard the announcement from the Prime Minister that it won't be possible for all exams to go ahead as normal this summer and that the Government will work with Ofqual and exam boards on alternative arrangements.

We know that you'll want to hear what this means. We don't ourselves have any more detail to provide you with at this stage, but be assured that we'll keep you updated as soon as we know more. What we are keen to explore is what exactly is meant by saying it won't be possible for all exams to go ahead in the summer as normal as that is not the same as saying 'no examinations will go ahead in the summer and they are cancelled'!

Safeguarding and Student Support

The Academy's safeguarding and pastoral teams will continue to support students during this period of closure. Safeguarding and welfare concerns should be reported to solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk with the subject line of 'CONFIDENTIAL - SAFEGUARDING'.

Next Steps and Ongoing Communication

If you need to contact the Academy throughout this period of closure, we recommend doing so by email to solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk. Telephone messages will still be routinely monitored; however, you will receive a response far sooner via email communications.

Students can also contact teaching staff directly via Gmail or via Google Classroom. Please be reminded that teachers may not respond to emails outside of normal working hours.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank students, staff and parents for their ongoing patience, support and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Tague
Executive Principal



Mr S Tait
Associate Principal

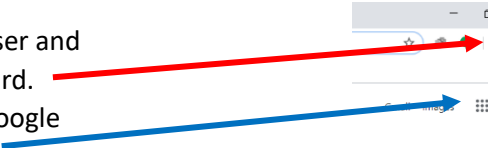
Google Classroom for Students and Parents at Home

This document includes general guidance for Students who are working from home and Parents who wish to receive updates via Google Classroom, with respect to their child's work.

Students

WMG Academy uses Google Classroom exclusively for the setting of coursework and homework. All students should be familiar with the use of Google Classroom, but different PC configurations may mean that it is slightly different when at home, to the usual classroom PC or Laptop.

Here is a shortcut method to logging into Google Apps from any PC.

1. Open a Browser
 - a. The preference is to use Google Chrome
 - b. Other browsers will work fine, but may limit some functions
 - c. Google Chrome can be easily loaded by searching 'download google chrome' Password
2. Navigate to www.google.co.uk
3. Click on the circular icon in the top right of the browser and log in using your Academy email address and password. 
4. Once logged in, use the nine squares to access the Google Apps available to you.

Parents

Parents CANNOT log directly into Google Classroom. They receive an email from Google with a regular update as to the work being set and a student's progress. When Google Classroom was configured, earlier this year, you would have received an email from Google asking you if you wish to receive these updates. If you have a Gmail Account, you can elect to receive daily updates, other email addresses can only receive weekly.

If you are not receiving these, please email g.jacklin@wmgacademy.org.uk with: -

1. Your child's name (First and Last Name)
2. Their date of birth
3. The email address you wish to use to receive updates

We will then update our records and you will receive a new email from Google asking you to confirm you wish to receive these updates.