

3 April 2020

Re: End of Spring Term 2020 for Students

Dear Student,

Please also share this letter and links with Parent/Carers as appropriate.

Incredibly you have already completed two weeks since our home working and distance learning arrangements became a necessity. Whilst it won't have been easy for anyone, most of you have embraced this new 'normal' and are working in a very focussed way, despite the inevitable disruption and using new approaches. I know that staff have been working tirelessly to maintain the flow of work and have needed to quickly establish new ways of doing things to ensure that your learning continues with as little disruption as possible. Thank you for responding as you have and adapting with them so quickly.

Today sees the end of the Spring Term and the start of the Easter Break, so I hope that you will make the most of the opportunities that brings, whilst setting clear plans in place to be ready to resume study more formally again on Monday 20th April. It will of course continue to be important for you to play your part in the national efforts that will protect against the spread of Coronavirus and to follow the guidance particularly carefully, which includes the need to remain at home, to support social distancing and to maintain good hygiene.

I know that many of you will have joined the chorus of thanks for NHS staff and key workers over the past few weeks, especially during the Thursday evening applause to show appreciation for those individuals who are continuing to save lives, keep essential services happening and supporting the most vulnerable in our society. I know also that many of you are doing valuable things within your family, supporting local communities or simply keeping supportive connections at distance with your peers and fellow students too. So, I wanted to say a personal thank you to you for how you have supported others around you over the last few weeks as that sense of community keeps shining through. If you have details of a special project or contribution to share, or if you want to give a special shout out for the contributions of another WQE student who is doing something special, please do get in touch. It would be especially nice to be able to collate, share and celebrate some of those special efforts in due course.

Please be reassured that over the Easter break we are continuing our commitment to be accessible for any of our students who face difficult personal circumstances or vulnerabilities and so we are maintaining a core staff presence on site, for all but our bank holiday closure days (Friday 10th to Tuesday 14th inclusive). Our safeguarding and student welfare pages on the College website and WQE online are also a source of helpful information should you need information on how to access help at any time. There is new and additional information to support mental health and wellbeing for you to access and view should you need this. Furthermore, our counselling services continue to operate at distance and by telephone, so those who have been offered and are waiting for this can be reassured that this is still going to be available and staff are working through waiting lists to prioritise this support and will make contact. Should circumstances mean that you need to visit us on site please note that the South Drive entrance and gates from Victoria Park Road are now closed until further notice and the College should only be accessed from the University Road end only.

OfQual have today published the anticipated general guidance on how they intend to develop calculated grades by the end of the academic year for those who were expecting to take external GCSE, AS and A Levels this Summer, which will involve working with schools and colleges ahead of a 29th May 2020 deadline. This is likely to be a detailed and complex process and our staff will need the time to read and digest the detail as more is communicated from the awarding bodies for each course over the coming few weeks. At this stage I am able to provide these links to the most recent letter to student from OfQual, which includes general responses to frequently asked questions and guidance on what will be implemented nationally;

[Letter for students from OfQual 03/04/20:](#)

We anticipate hearing more from the specific awarding bodies shortly and then to be in the position to be able to implement the necessary plans required to reach and standardise assessments on our return after Easter. However, OfQual have been clear that schools and colleges will not be permitted to share or discuss the detail of assessments or student rankings directly with students at any stage, to protect the integrity of the national processes. We have therefore told staff that they should do nothing different at this point, other than to finish key course content, whilst excluding any new tests or mock assessments. That will now remain the position until we return after the Easter break and we will communicate further about any newly emerged detail and our implementation of the requirements at that stage. We still await the equivalent guidance in relation to the process for vocational qualifications and this is not expected until after Easter. Students following vocational courses should therefore continue to complete ongoing work for these as fully as possible, in line with the existing arrangements for the course.

It just remains for me to say thank you and have a happy Easter to each of you. It will feel different to any other, I'm sure, but try to enjoy the time, recharge and despite your social distancing from others, keep in regular touch remotely with friends and fellow students over this period so that you can continue to be there for each other.

Yours sincerely

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

Paul Wilson
PRINCIPAL