



Message to Parents and Students at Abbey College Cambridge 5th January 2021

Dear Parents and Students,

The situation in England has changed within hours of my previous letter sent to parents on 4th January.

England is about to enter a national lockdown during which time face-to-face lessons are not permitted. The government has also announced that GCSE and A-level examinations will not be sat this year.

The lockdown does not have a definite end date yet but it will not be before the half term in February (15-19th). We expect that the lockdown may continue into March but face-to-face lessons to resume after half term. As time goes on the situation will become clearer, especially as we see the effect of the mass vaccination programme. This programme has already seen over one million people in the UK receive the vaccination.

GCSE and A-level grades will not be awarded by examination

We have not had notification of how GCSE and A-level grades will be awarded this year. It is likely that the awards will be based on testing done by schools of students in year 11 (GCSE) and year 13 (A-level), taking into account the work they did in their previous education with us (year 10 and 12). It is vital that all students therefore continue to attend all lessons and work hard to prepare for any school-based assessments. It is also likely that the assessments will take place during this term and next, and be conducted up to the end of the summer term in June. In this way the full curriculum can be taught and assessed.

As always, we consider onsite teaching to be preferable and to give a better preparation for assessments and so we will restart onsite teaching as soon as we are permitted. Meanwhile, we hope that students who are in the UK with us stay with us to enable them to swiftly join face-to-face lessons when they restart.

Likewise we are happy to accept any student arriving at Abbey during or after this period of lockdown. Our boarding houses will remain open until the end of the academic year.

Education during lockdown

During the six weeks up to half term all lessons, homework and testing will be delivered remotely, via Microsoft Teams by your child's usual teacher, in their usual classes. We are becoming very experienced and proficient at using this technology and I am confident that your child will continue to receive high quality teaching.

We will also continue to provide personal tutoring support, House activities and assemblies, academic enrichment ('Abbey Inspires'), remote work experience and university preparation ('Pre Degree Diploma'). We will continue to organise our timetable to ensure that this extra work will be

delivered before UK school starts (8.15 am UK time) to children in time zones that are ahead of the UK, and after the school day for children in the UK or in time zones behind the UK (3.15 pm UK time).

We had this same situation from March to June 2020, so have some excellent experience that I'm sure you will find reassuring – due to the continued commitment of the students, coupled with the excellent online teaching and enrichment programs from the staff, we had a record amount of students enter G5 universities, and our strongest ever set of A-level results.

Student Boarding and the Covid Secure Campus

During lockdown students will live in one of three locations: the main campus (in Purbeck House and Abbey House), the Orchard House campus or in non-Abbey boarding (including with family or host family). Students will not be permitted to move between these three locations. The main campus and the Orchard House campus will form two separate student 'bubbles'.

Students will be permitted to move around in their own campus to access common rooms, library areas, music and art facilities, dining areas, playground and sports areas. We will arrange activities to ensure our students get fresh air and socialise safely with students within their campus. As per the government restrictions, we will not permit students to leave their campus during lockdown. In order to create a secure single main campus we shall be asking students in Tripos Court to move to Purbeck House.

At the start of the secure campus phase each student will be covid tested twice (this will happen from Monday 11th) and all staff who look after these students will be tested weekly (starting on this Friday 8th). This test includes all boarding staff, cleaners, caterers, security and anyone who is regularly on site. The test is the Lateral Flow test.

My very best wishes to you and thank you for all of your support of Abbey Cambridge.

Regards

Julian Davies

Principal