



Contact:

Ref: PKI

Principal
Peter Kirkbride MA

14th April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we finish the Easter Bank holiday and head into the fourth week of Brooke Weston being closed, I thought it a good time to write, stay in touch and update you on a number of topics. I hope you and your families are safe and well. I am very aware that for many this is a time of anxiety and that members of the wider Brooke Weston community are dealing with illness, separation and job worries. I want you to know that we are here and want to help where we can.

Thank you

Can I start by thanking you for the kind messages of support both my staff and I have received. Each message is shared with the whole team and each time I receive messages back from staff thanking me for the message and telling me how much it meant to them. Like you, they are in lockdown at home and are missing their colleagues and students.

If you would like to thank a member of staff, then the **'Thank a teacher'** scheme is a brilliant place to start. Please to complete the application form at <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher/thank-a-teacher-form/> I want to thank all of the Brooke Weston Academy staff for their hard work, care and professionalism over this time.

I also want to highlight how proud I was of the students during the closure. They reacted with their usual positivity, humour and 'can do' attitude. This is especially true of the Year 11 and 13 students who were, rightfully, anxious about what the closure would mean for their examinations. Please pass on a 'remote' well done from me.

Update on Brooke Weston Academy

Although the Academy is closed, we continue to operate a small staff to keep the school operational and more importantly to look after the children of key workers and some of our more vulnerable students. I say the Academy is closed, but that is far from the reality. In addition to the team working in school, we continue to operate our student care and safeguarding systems, teachers are creating lessons from home and support staff continue to prepare for us opening at some point. All of the staff have become overnight masters of Microsoft TEAMS and video calls!

Brooke Weston Academy support to the NHS

We have tried to answer the call from the NHS for any spare PPE we have and I am delighted to say we have made three donations of sterile gloves, eye protection, aprons, hand sanitiser and other items to Kettering General Hospital, Corby Community Hospital and a GP practice – we even managed some tea and donuts for the staff at KGH! I know all of us are so proud of our NHS staff, I recently heard them described as the *'Spitfire pilots'* of this time and that seemed a perfect description to me. My friends in the NHS have shared with me how much the support has meant to them.

Government Free School Meal Voucher Scheme

I have seen with dismay, the food shortages in the media. I am pleased that this issue is starting to resolve itself. The Academy has worked hard to continue to provide meals to students eligible for Free School Meals and I am delighted that the Brooke Weston Trust has put a voucher scheme in place for four weeks, whilst the new government scheme was being launched. If you have any questions about the voucher scheme please email fsm@brookeweston.org

Home learning for students

As I have previously mentioned, teachers are creating resources for their classes and placing these on Microsoft TEAMS. I know, from your messages, that many of you are really appreciative of this work and it is also helping to keep students in a routine and enjoying their academic studies. Continuing their work is especially important for students in years 10 and 12 who will enter their examinations year in September and will sit exams in May 2021.

That said, I completely appreciate that we cannot replicate school at home and nor would I wish to do so. Many of us are trying to work from home, with partners also trying to work, children who need looking after and in some cases have illness to deal with. I trust parents to do what is right for their family in this time and I know that this will mean at times that students can work on their school studies and at other times this will not be possible. Speaking personally, both my wife and I are working from home with a 6-year-old and an 18 month old, both who have developed chicken pox over the last two weeks! We are grateful for the work my 6-year old's school is sending, and trying to complete it when we can, but are focussing on keeping his maths and reading on track. We are also trying to see the positives in the current situation and are enjoying spending time together, eating together and playing in the garden together. We know that the current situation will end at some point, schools will re-open and academic life will re-start. When it does, you know that Brooke Weston Academy will do everything possible to help catch our students up on any work missed. I hope that reassures some parents about this issue.

Please remember that Brooke Weston Academy is still working the usual term and holiday dates. Teachers will not be uploading work for the two week May holiday and we are not expecting students to do any work over the holidays.

Ofqual announcement regarding Year 11 and 13 summer 2020 examinations

For parents of students in Year 11 and 13, on Friday I published two important letters regarding the announcement from Ofqual (regulator who oversees the national examination process) in relation to GCSE and A level summer examinations. This information also applies to some Year 12 students for example core maths. It is important to note that ***the Academy or staff cannot respond to questions or release information about students' grades***. I know that this is a difficult time, but it is important to remember that Ofqual have made it clear that their main focus is to be fair to students and ensure they are not disadvantaged. The whole education system is working hard to make sure students are looked after and able to move onto the next step of their education.

Change of Principal

You will know that my last day as Principal of Brooke Weston Academy is Friday 8th May 2020. I will write again before I leave, but please be reassured that in the meantime I continue to lead the Academy and handover to my excellent replacement Mr Strydom who is the current Senior Vice Principal.

Thank you for your ongoing support for Brooke Weston Academy over this time.

Yours sincerely



P Kirkbride
Principal