

5th January 2021



Principal **Nick Martin**
BSc, MA, PGCE, NPQH

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for your kind words and emails of support today as we, like all those in the education sector, navigate our way through the recent government changes. There is a lot that is still uncertain and we will regularly update you via EduLink when we have any essential information. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the Academy with any questions or queries you may have. Please use SWA-Info@bestacademies.org.uk

Today, we welcomed 40 students within our critical worker and vulnerable provision and they were all exceptional, making the Academy very proud. In addition, we had hundreds and hundreds of learners connect live to interact with their peers and our teachers, who delivered high quality lessons across all year groups from either our school site or from home today. Attendance was incredibly high and we had fantastic levels of engagement. Please remember that if your child is over 10mins late to the lesson they may be marked as absent. It was lovely seeing so many of your children in their live tutor group sessions this morning; those, combined with our assembly from the Heads of Year later this week, will hopefully reassure your child and help them to feel connected and part of the Samuel Whitbread community.

We have had a number of requests regarding students visiting the site to empty their lockers or collect their books. We appreciate that for many students this is really important as they settle in and begin new routines for the next six weeks. To that end, we will be scheduling a time next week for each year group to be on site and to collect their belongings. Please await an email with specific dates and times. To ensure this runs smoothly, we are inviting Year 13 students on site this Friday (8th January) to trial the process and collect their books or belongings. Year 13 students should enter the Academy via the main gates by reception, where they will sanitise their hands. Please do not go into Reception. Students should only go to their locker and their allocated timetable classrooms. They must remain socially distanced at all times and they will not have an opportunity to interact with staff or other students on site.

Those of you who are using our critical worker or vulnerable student provision will be receiving an email from Mr Rowell outlining how we will be undertaking the lateral flow testing for all those on site. Please ensure you have completed your child's consent form via EduLink. By regularly testing students on site we can ensure that we protect staff and students, as well as our wider community.

To ensure our live lessons run smoothly we ask that your child is fully prepared with all of the relevant equipment and it would be fantastic if your child could layout their books and resources for the day ahead each morning. During the national lockdown, we will still be setting homework via Satchel One (formerly known as show my homework). It is important that your child checks this platform regularly and completes the homework tasks as scheduled. We appreciate that for some students this may feel like extra pressure and we will be monitoring the situation going forward; however, our experience has shown that when students work independently they often complete work set much quicker than when in a classroom as there isn't the natural interactions and dialogue, therefore homework and extension resources on

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their Google classrooms provide ample opportunity to keep your child learning for their full timetabled hours. A reminder that if your child's teacher is unwell during the national lockdown period they will not be delivering live lessons, however work will still be uploaded to Google classroom for completion and where possible the department will look to rearrange and support their colleagues by delivering other teachers' lessons on their behalf.

Please note that there will be no live core PE lessons throughout the national lockdown. The PE department will regularly be uploading workout ideas, videos and exercise opportunities. We would like our students to use these Core PE hours as their well-being hours. It is incredibly important that they not only look after themselves physically but also mentally and emotionally. During this time, we recommend that your child completes some exercise, walks the dog or partakes in a hobby or activity they enjoy. Providing they are in the same population, they should be encouraged to contact their friends and speak regularly with their peers to ensure they feel connected and not isolated at home.

If you have any questions regarding free school meals please contact Mr Candlin who will be coordinating the free school meal provision over this national lockdown period. At present, there has been little information shared; however, we are optimistic that we will be running the voucher system again. In the meantime, we ask for your patience; but, if you are in need of support urgently, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are still awaiting further information from The Department for Education regarding this Summer's exam arrangements. We do not want to speculate at this time and are continuing to deliver the curriculum sequence as planned. Until official communication from the DfE and Ofqual is released we will not be changing our current learning pathways. As calendared, we will be sending Year 11 mock results to students via email. We ask all students who have a scheduled examination or IPE this week to continue to come into the Academy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fantastic staff for everything they did over the Christmas holiday and on Inset Day to ensure Samuel Whitbread could deliver a quality learning experience for all our students at the Academy. I would also like to thank you as parents and carers, your understanding has not gone unnoticed and together we will ensure that all in the community are safe and well over the coming months.

Kind regards
Mr Martin
Principal

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