

Dear Parent / Carer,

**Re: COVID19 Update – OPA General**

I trust you are safe and well. I would like to provide a brief overview on the updates that have occurred since my last communication to you.

**Provision for ASCEND Children, Children of Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children**

The academy remains open for onsite learning for Year 7-11 ASCEND students who follow their usual timetable and learning. We have onsite provision for Year 7–11 vulnerable students and students who have a parent who is a critical worker / key worker. These students will be supported to access their usual timetabled online Microsoft Teams lessons.

**Remote Education Update**

All other Year 7-11 students must access remote learning at home via Microsoft Teams. Lessons are also delivered to the normal timetable. Classwork, homework and assessments will all take place on Microsoft Teams throughout the rest of this half term and students will be expected to attend and fully participate in all lessons. They will be marked for both attendance and how engaged they are in every lesson. Students are also expected to attend two Tutor Time activities and one Assembly every week. We have set up several online Teams enrichment clubs, tutoring sessions and pastoral small group and individual sessions to support mental health. We started remote online education really well with good attendance across all Year Groups. If you do not have access to remote learning either through a lack of internet or suitable device, please inform the academy as soon as possible via contacting [opa-ithelpdesk@ormistonpark.org.uk](mailto:opa-ithelpdesk@ormistonpark.org.uk). If your child needs a password reset or has a log in issue then please email direct to their Head of Year.

**What is being proposed for GCSE Exams Summer 2021?**

In contrast to last year, when teacher judgements were used, it is proposed that exam boards will make available assessment papers and that these would be marked by teachers. This marking would be subject to exam board moderation to check for accuracy. Some of the announcements made last week may have created the impression that it would simply be up to teachers to determine the grade, this does not appear to be the case. It is vitally important that all Year 11 students attend and engage in their full timetable via Teams until they return to onsite learning. Without access to online lessons they will be at a huge disadvantage when teachers need to provide grades for subjects. Students will also need to achieve a grade that is appropriate for the ability on the exam board assessments which will be provided to schools.

**What is being proposed for Vocational Exams Summer 2021?**

The consultation for vocational qualifications is very different and reflects the fact that there is wide range of qualifications types, sizes and levels. The DfE has established a set of principles for assessing student work, but proposes to delegate much more authority about how grading will work to the individual exam boards. At the moment it is not possible to say, as with GCSE, that 'the assessment will work like this' and we expect it will be at least six weeks before we have a firm idea. What we do know, is that it is critical that students continue to diligently complete work provided by teachers online via Microsoft Teams.

### **Discussion over Grades**

As with last year, the proposals would not allow staff to discuss marks and grades with students and parents until the results are published. Therefore, **students and parents should not seek to lobby or canvas the opinions of teaching staff about grades**, as staff will be instructed not to enter into these discussions.

### **Free School Meals**

This week we have worked hard to ensure that parents whose children remain at home receive their free school meal allocation. All families who are eligible for this support, and whose children are at home, should now have received a £15 voucher from Schoolvouchers.com (you can find help and guidance for this supplier [here](#)) and a £60 voucher from a company called EDENRED (you can find help and guidance for this supplier [here](#)). In line with government guidance, all our eligible families have received their allocation in bulk, the government have only allowed schools to provide vouchers up until the 12th of February. When we receive any more information on the scheme, or if the voucher provision is extended, we will ensure that families are allocated their vouchers immediately.

### **COVID19 Lateral Flow Testing?**

We have very quickly established a Lateral Flow Testing schedule and our testing both students and staff across the week. To date we have conducted over 200 tests. Thank you to all involved in this project.

### **Support**

I would like to take this opportunity to remind students that we are here to help. There are a wide range of support options available and students and or parents should discuss these with their Form Tutors or Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year if it is regarding their wellbeing.

Thank you for your continued support. Working together we will overcome the challenges of this situation. Please continue to take care and to stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Mark Roessler  
Principal  
Ormiston Park Academy