



# The Valley Leadership Academy

## Executive Principal Newsflash

*Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September*

### Being COVID aware.

As we are now aware there are stricter restrictions in the North West. This comes on the back of news reporting that the Test and Trace system did not anticipate that there would be a rise in the need for test kits when children started to return to school.

To me it would be quite obvious that as we return to how things were, we would need to prepare as best we can because the virus has not disappeared, it is very much floating about the country and across the world. It is likely to be with us for some considerable time as well.

I would like to thank our parents and carers for working with us. Many of you have sent your children to school with a face covering, provided them with hand sanitiser gel and given them refillable water bottles.

I want to prepare us all for something that might happen, so that it is not a shock and so that you can understand why Headteachers sometimes must make difficult and unpopular decisions. As you are aware many schools across the country have had to send groups of students home to isolate. This impact is felt by all parents and families including our staff. Not all staff have access to childcare in the new lockdown restrictions. Whilst we are developing contingency plans, it is fair to say that this childcare issue will cause schools a real dilemma in ensuring all students access learning from their class teacher.

It may be likely to get to the stage where schools will have a group or groups at home remote learning. We are not at that point yet, but we could be if there was a sudden surge in cases that meant a lot of staff had to be at home. In anticipation of this we are publishing online plans for remote learning for all year groups. These will be fully online by the end of school Wednesday. Please take time to have a look at the documents and the ways in which we will continue to provide learning.

These are the challenges that all schools are facing right now but we are doing our best for your children and for you.

## Attendance Matters – Everyday counts

It is clear that the combination of the COVID situation as well as the seasonal bout of colds and flu that begin to appear towards the end of September will have a negative effect on attendance in each year group.

I'd like to thank all those parents and carers who are continuing to support us both in sending pupils to school but also those of you who have actively sought our advice when your child has the sniffles. It is very much about us working together using our common sense and looking after each other. Today we had 12 students home with a cold. Pre-COVID we would be expecting these students to attend and learn as normal. It is a well proven fact that without great attendance students struggle to achieve meet their potential.

We have put a poster on our website to help parents in making an initial decision around a simple cold versus COVID. Please note that COVID symptoms are a temperature over 37.8, a continuous dry cough or a complete lack of smell/taste. If you are in any doubt, please call our attendance team and they will offer advice.

## Appearance Matters

I recently wrote to parents in relation to uniform and expectations. COVID has obviously caused issues with uniform supply. I am aware that many parents are waiting for school blazers, PE kit and ties. We now have a supply of ties for sale directly from the Academy. I would note that over the next few days and weeks, we will be correcting all items of non-branded uniform. In particular I will be insisting that jeans, leggings, skirt length, make-up and jewellery all fall within the Academy uniform policy. If there are any issues, please contact the Academy immediately this week.

## Manners Matter

I am a firm believer that 'good manners' are an essential element of the DNA of a Valley student. Over the coming weeks and months, I will be insisting that our STEP model is reinforced at every opportunity. These are:

S – Sir/Miss

T – Thank you

E – Eye contact

P – Please.

I will be asking all of my staff to ensure that all our students consistently adopt this simple model.

## Open Evening

This year we cannot operate an Open Evening in the same fashion as we would normally do, the Rule of 6 makes it a real challenge in that respect as we would want to showcase our building and curriculum areas.

So instead we are in the process of producing a short film to capture what we do including what some of our pupils want to say about their school.

We are due to go live with an Open Evening Town Hall online meeting on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October, but I will confirm all the details nearer the time.

## Year 11 Period 6

Year 11 have had a disrupted start to the term. I have however been really impressed with their commitment. Period 6 attendance has now started, and I can honestly say I have been impressed by the amazing commitment and participation from a wonderful group of young people.

I will be trying to speak individually to all year 11 students and parents over the next week to outline the support and commitment we will be giving and expecting. Period 6 sessions will focus on the skills needed to get those higher marks and higher grades, there is opportunity to revisit topic areas as well as develop mastery appreciation of concepts. We really are so proud of the great start your children are making. Currently period 6 sessions are as follows.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Science	English		Maths	Geography

## Homework Timetable – September 2020

A new homework approach and timetable will be in operation from Today. In Key stage 3 students will have at least 1 hour each evening. This will be made up of self-quizzing homework from their new knowledge organisers. It will also include compulsory elements of online platforms to set homework such as Hegarty maths, Tassomai or GCSE Pod. At Key stage 4 core work will be supported by bespoke homework linked to the GCSE subjects they are studying. The homework timetable will be available on the Academy website.

## Year 11 Summer examinations

Year 11, there are only 27 school weeks left, just 135 days in school, until your first GCSE exam. Remember the route to GCSE success is a marathon and not a sprint.

Your GCSE grades will depend on your hard work and commitment throughout the year and not last-minute revision the week or night before an exam.

By now you should all have an idea what you may want to do when you leave The Valley at the end of this academic year. It is important, however, that you get as much information as you can about the different colleges you can apply to and the courses and qualifications on offer.

Try and get along to as many 'Virtual' Open Days or Events as you can over this term so that you are well informed and can make the right choices for your future.

## Safeguarding

If you are worried about a child or have concerns about something that does not seem right contacting the NSPCC can be the first step to helping resolve a difficult situation.

Their website is <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/> and they can be contacted on via email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) or telephone 0808 800 5000.

They also have some fantastic resources and information about the online world <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/> where it deals with real life issues of sexting and sending nudes, simply talking to your child about the internet and apps as well as more challenging topics such as inappropriate or explicit content.



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