



28 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

General update – Covid-19, Remote Learning Statement, SRPA Rewards Update - Home Learning Heroes, Academy feedback week, Year 9 Options week, Year 9 Options Q&A session 3 February, Examinations 2021, Personal Development Day 2 February, Aspiring Scientists - Year 12, Year 12 Virtual Work Experience

After a week of quite wintry weather and some very cold temperatures, I hope my weekly letter finds you well as the end of January approaches. I always ask myself where January goes to as it feels like Christmas was a lifetime away and we are almost a month into 2021. I suppose they do say that time flies when you're having fun.....

Covid-19

This past week, debate has raged around government plans to reopen schools with many calls to act rapidly to reopen and, indeed, just yesterday the PM committed to an 8 March reopening 'at the very earliest.' Once I hear of anything concrete I will report back to you but, for now, it is status quo. This is a time which is testing many of us with cold and inhospitable weather, finances are strained, Christmas feels long past and the virus still has a stranglehold on what we can and cannot do.

We have received some criticism for ceasing the lateral flow tests 13 working days after commencement. This is simply a case of us following ever-changing government guidance. Whilst I sit here writing this, the best I can do is politely request that you 'don't shoot the messenger' as we respond to the latest demands.

We continue to evaluate our work surrounding Covid-19 at a time of great national uncertainty to prepare for the short and medium term but, fear not, we have a good handle on what may be coming down the line insofar as that is possible and will respond accordingly.

If any parents have any other concerns related to Covid-19 in school, please contact us at the Academy using the email address COVID@srpa.co.uk.

Remote Learning Statement

From this week, it is now law that every school must publish its remote learning statement for all stakeholders to be able to view. Whilst I view this as an unnecessary step from government in what is becoming an ever more punitive educational landscape, our offering can be found on the website under the **Our Curriculum** tab. It is comprehensive and clear. I might add that as we offer 100% live lessons wherever possible, this is not being achieved by every school

and not with the agility we are managing. That said, 100% live does not mean that the teacher should be talking for the whole time. We recommend to staff that, for each hour long lesson, they should be talking to students for less than half the time to allow for task completion, support and intervention and just being available.

SRPA Rewards Update - Home Learning Heroes

We continue to be delighted by the dedication and maturity shown by our youngsters to their home learning. The Academy would like to recognise this with our Home Learning Heroes. In recognition of the engagement of so many of our pupils, we have adapted the system so that up to 4 can be awarded by our class teachers per lesson. The top 10 students per house, per week, will be rewarded based on the number of Stars of the Lesson they manage to achieve.

Academy Feedback Week

The week beginning Monday 1 February is Academy Feedback week. The focus of many lessons will be to ensure that students receive helpful and constructive feedback on the work that they have completed so far this half term. The feedback will take many forms and this will be subject dependent. It could range from verbal and written feedback to feedback from many of our online platforms such as Mathswatch or Accelerated Reader. The last week of half term will be an opportunity for consolidation, enrichment and extension whereby students will have the opportunity to deepen and extend their learning.

Year 9 Options week

Our Y9 Options microsite has been live since Monday this week and was launched on Monday morning in R2L time.

The application form remains available through the FROG microsite along with copies of all other information. The deadline for a completed application will be Friday 5 February 2021. Any questions should be directed through to options@srpa.co.uk where the options team will pick it up and be able to deal with your enquiry.

Year 9 Options Q&A session 3 February

Mr Ward and Mr Kirk will be holding a remote Q&A Options event on the evening of 3 February 2021. Joining instructions will be following very soon for all Year 9 parents who may wish to take advantage of this opportunity.



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Examinations 2021

There is still time to add your response to the ongoing consultations with regard to examinations this summer. The links to the Ofqual consultations with parents, students and educators regarding the process can be found below:

GCSE and A levels:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953000/6743-1_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf

Vocational qualifications:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953003/6743-2_2021_VTQ_alternative_arrangements_consultation_15JAN21.pdf

Personal Development Day 2 February

Next week is a busy week in our personal development curriculum. On Tuesday 2 February we are trialling our first fully virtual Personal Development Day. In such a strange year we will be continuing to offer our personal development curriculum, making sure that we make appropriate adjustments to support our students in the best way possible. With this in mind, next week we will have a health and wellbeing focus for all of our year groups.

For the first three lessons of the day, students will follow their normal timetable. The three sessions in the morning include next steps and careers work on Unifrog, SRPA Values sessions focussing on various elements of discrimination, along with a focus on enrichment activities including culinary challenges such as 'The Baked Bean Challenge.' We are also supporting our cohort with developing their understanding of the impact of cyberbullying. For more detail of the provision for each year group please see the table attached.

If students have forgotten their Unifrog password they can simply go to <https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in> and click forgotten your password, enter their school email and a link will be sent. On Monday, we will send a reminder to R2L tutors to ask students to log into their Unifrog account as a test. This should identify any issues with logins too.

In the afternoon, we will focus on health and wellbeing. Students will register with their form tutor and will then receive a menu of health and wellbeing activities to explore. Once introduced to students, they will be invited to engage in something from the menu, or using ideas of their own, taking some time away from their 'normal' timetable. Please encourage students to send through pictures and details on an email detailing what activities they have tried. The students who engage positively will receive Star of the Lesson awards as well as potentially being nominated for Personal Development Awards this term.



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As part of our wellbeing push, our R2L tutors and pastoral team will be checking in with all students at some point in the afternoon. Students will receive more information about timings over the next few school days.

Aspiring Scientists - Year 12

Pembroke College, Cambridge are offering us a week-long residential opportunity for students aspiring to go into a career in science, which is an excellent opportunity for a number of our Year 12 students.

Students would have an option of the following dates:

- 12th - 17th July 2021
- 19th - 24th July 2021

All costs are reimbursed to students.

More info can be found here - <https://www.gurdon.cam.ac.uk/public-engagement/workexperience> via The Gurdon Institute.

Formerly called 'The Gurdon Institute's Work Experience Programme', the Aspiring Scientists Training Programme is funded by the University of Cambridge's Widening Participation programme. Our aim is to enable students with an interest in pursuing a career or higher education in science to gain first-hand knowledge of an academic research environment when they may not ordinarily have the opportunity.

Miss Griffiths will email all Year 12 Scientists with the information on how to apply.

Year 12 Virtual Work Experience

On Monday and Tuesday next week we are trialling our first ever Virtual Work Experience. This will involve Year 12 students being off timetable for the full two days. Normally this would be for the full week at this time of year.

Students will have a variety of sessions led by external businesses and staff at the school with the aim of giving them some valuable interactions with people from a variety of roles and responsibilities. Students will have time to reflect on the presentations, doing their own research to support the completion of their work experience log book. Students will submit their booklets at 3.15pm on Tuesday, demonstrating their understanding and learning during this process. This will allow us to recognise the efforts of our students. The electronic work booklet will be assessed as Pass, Merit or Distinction with a follow up presentation of these awards later next term.



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As we approach the end of the month and the news headlines make for grim reading, it is important to reflect on our individual and collective journeys so far and to try not to get too far ahead of ourselves. Our community is buoyed by our joint actions when we look after each other and even small acts of kindness can mean the world to someone. I am also keenly aware of the toll this is taking on the mental health of so many of the SRPA family, as well as society more broadly. It can sometimes be difficult, amidst the throes of life and its many challenges, to see the light shining ahead as we battle on. So, whether you are reading this as a parent, one of our fine youngsters or as a member of my staff team, my quote this week is there to remind you of how valuable you really are. In the inimitable words of American poet, Jennifer Williamson:

“You plant seeds every single day, in the world and in others, with every thought you think and word you speak and action you take. You have influence. You’re making a dent in the universe and you matter, in a very real way.”

Take the best of care this next week.

I will write again soon.

Yours faithfully



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