

Message from Mrs Kellow

With the unfortunate situation of working remotely we wanted to continue the monthly bulletin to provide you with the information you need, along with tips on keeping your child engaged and motivated whilst working at home. It will also provide you with links to any government updates, along with any plans we have to assess student progress whilst working remotely.

Year 11

The recent announcement regarding examinations not happening in May and June has left us all with a lot of questions. Although we do not have all of the answers, we want to provide you with as much reassurance and guidance as we can. We have created a video update to Year 11 please find it <https://www.poltairschool.co.uk/index.html>. The government have said there will be fair exam alternatives in place, we think it is likely that they will use teacher assessment, supported with evidence. Your teachers have been asked to keep your mock examinations scripts and to gather as much evidence for each student as possible.

We know that you are saddened by the news that you will not get to sit your exams, this is something we have all been building towards. It is down to all of us to keep focused and to give each other as much support as we can. Your teachers will continue to have the same expectations of you in terms of work, will set work at the usual times and have clear guidelines about the work that you submit to them. The key messages we want to give you are;

1. Students will be assessed in some way this summer, whether it be a teacher assessment or a different type of assessment the government/exam boards come up with, so it is vital you keep studying and preparing.
2. If we have to send teacher assessments to the exam boards, we may need evidence to support the grades we submit. During closure we may set exam questions and past papers for you to sit that help build a portfolio of evidence that can be used to support a possible forecast grade we give to each of you.

In summary, we have all got to keep working towards that end goal of a good result no matter what form that may take and while it may seem like your end goal has been taken from you it has not, it has just changed due to these difficult circumstances. As soon as we have any further news on GCSE and BTEC courses we will communicate this to you.

Year 10

Students only have five terms left at Poltair School before they sit their final GCSE examinations. I know it might still seem a long way off but, as Year 11 students know, the time will come around quickly! It is incredibly important that over this term they continue to work at home, as they would in school. We want them to be starting Year 11 fully prepared. They need to ensure that they have all the skills and knowledge from KS3 and Year 10 embedded in order to be successful.

Tips for surviving remote learning

- 1) **Structure**—try to follow the school timetable where possible. Make sure you have a clear morning routine, like you would if your child was at school.
- 2) **Create a comfortable workspace**—where possible set up work stations at desks or tables. Try to avoid sustained periods of times where students are in poor postures and working on sofas or beds. Limit noise and distractions during lesson time.
- 3) **Self Care**—reduce the brightness of digital screens and devices, encourage frequent movement and stretching, eat for brain power with nutrient-rich foods.
- 4) **Communicate**—discuss the work with your child, and talk to their teachers and tutors if you have any concerns or questions. Encourage communication with their friends and peers so they still feel connected to others.
- 5) **Compassion**—Adjusting your expectations during this never-before-seen pandemic era is vital. Kids may not be able to thrive in the ways you are used to seeing, or they may need time to adjust. Feeling compassion and patience from you as their parents will make all the difference. It's also important to have compassion for yourself and for those moments when you feel like you're not winning as a parent. We have numerous well-being resources on the school website, please do have a look.

Parents Evening 3rd to 11th February

We would like to invite you to a virtual parents evening with your child's tutor during the week of 3rd to 11th February. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your child's progress in their subjects, their engagement with remote learning and any other queries you have.

Our parents evening system has the functionality for us to host video conferencing meetings. We will be writing to all parents with information on how you can book an appointment that suits you. All tutors will have a range of availability over the week.



You will have, or will shortly receive, a copy of your child's progress report ahead of the parents evening, please use this to help identify the subjects you must prioritise and help you form your questions to the tutor.

Other KS4 news

Tassomai

All Year 10 and 11 students have been given access to Tassomai—online revision software that uses intelligent programming to identify areas of strength and tackle students areas of weakness. There are weekly league tables for Science, Maths and English Literature and all questions completed are being recorded.

For any questions regarding Tassomai please ask your class teacher.



Maths intervention for Year 10

Small groups of Year 10 students have started working with Ms Hudson and Ms Heywood online to support them in closing any gaps they have in knowledge ahead of Year 11. If your child has been invited please ensure they attend, that they have pen and paper with them and please do ask them questions about the session. If you have any questions please contact Mr McNally.

Government updates



Statement from Gavin Williamson "I can confirm that GCSE exams will not go ahead this summer. This year we are going to put our trust in teachers rather than algorithms.

The department and Ofqual had already worked up a range of contingency options. While the details will need to be fine-tuned in consultation with Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representatives, I can confirm now that I wish to use a form of teacher-assessed grades, with training and support provided to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently.



Joint Council for Qualifications CIC <https://www.jcq.org.uk/jcq-statement-on-summer-2021-assessment-announcement/>



<https://www.pearson.com/uk/about-us/news-and-policy/news/2021/01/learner-update-on-vtq-assessments.html>

