

## Coronavirus update – 24/04/20

Dear Parents and Carers

I do hope that you all had an enjoyable Easter break despite the circumstances – at least the weather was smiling on us!

As you will be aware, the College has been a hive of activity across the Easter holiday and many of you will have been in regular communication with individual members of our senior leadership teams on all the various matters that have been affecting you, be they financial, educational, the wellbeing of your children, trips, and many other areas of our routine that have been challenged and changed by the pandemic. I hope that you, like I, have been struck by the absolute commitment of St Dunstan's staff to support you in whatever ways we can throughout this national crisis.

With the lockdown extension comes another phase of prolonged remote learning and I hope you have been pleased with the developments that have been enacted, in large part as a consequence of your feedback and the feedback of your children. To have got new courses up and running for Year 11 and Year 13 in a matter of days has been something of a herculean effort by our Departments but one that this week has reaped dividends as I have had the joy of seeing so many students in those year groups engage with the enrichment courses on offer with great enthusiasm. The new virtual Forder programme is so exciting, and it is wonderful that our staff are able to continue providing daily tutorial contact to your children, augmented with assemblies and other virtual pastoral messaging. As I reflect on the progress we have made, it is clear to me that we are several steps ahead of many others, and that is in no doubt due to the superb staff team we have in place at St Dunstan's, and my sincere thanks goes to them.

With the school now needing to settle into a new routine for the next three weeks at least, I do not feel it necessary to write to you daily, but I will endeavour to write to you at the end of each week with a round-up of events, and I will of course do so sooner if there is something pressing to report. Some of you have asked me if we will reopen as soon as we are allowed to do so – absolutely! Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to throw open the doors of St Dunstan's, but we must of course do that when the time is right and as dictated by government and their medical advisors. I did want to advise you that, as I explained in my Easter letter, our building works are continuing and it was a particular pleasure to see the concrete 'pour' happen this week – a milestone moment in this important development for our future. Other highlights have included the launch of our interactive 'Phoenix Project' in the Senior School, hearing Year 13 request that we continue offering them pastoral support virtually after the end of May (of course we will!), witnessing Nursery starting the day singing songs together, and reviewing pictures of new chickens and trampolining videos (thank you Junior School!).

I know many of you are finding life very tough at the moment and I can only reiterate that we are here for you as a community, and please do use us as a support during this incredibly difficult time for us all. Of course, that challenge is also the case for our teachers and other staff, some of whom are themselves battling incredibly challenging personal circumstances. I would ask for compassion and patience all round as we navigate these next few weeks. In particular, at the moment I would ask that you are mindful of staffing challenges in the Biology, Art and Geography Departments, as well as being mindful of the challenge for Junior School teachers who are also fundamental to the supervision of key worker children, as well as planning lessons without the support of specialists or Teaching Assistants.

In the meantime have a lovely weekend and continue to stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N P Hewlett', written in a cursive style.

Mr N P Hewlett  
Headmaster