

A message from Urmston Grammar - 28 April 2020

Dear Students,

You have now had several weeks in lockdown and we have no clear indicators when the social isolation guidelines will be reviewed.

As I am sure you can imagine the last few weeks have been a steep learning curve for all of us.

You are having to learn to work more independently at home without the direct supervision of your teachers; you are having to keep yourselves motivated.

Parents or carers will be juggling the different demands of family life with work and understanding some of the challenges of home-schooling.

Urmston Grammar teachers and support staff are trying to adapt to working remotely, coming into school to supervise the children of key workers and managing the demands of their own homes and families.

I hope that you are able to work effectively at home without the direct supervision of your teachers. If you have found it challenging, don't worry: you are not alone.

All over the country (and the world) families are having to deal with their 'new normal' and you may have found that some of the challenges include:

- having to share devices and WiFi with other family members;
- finding it difficult to find a quiet place to work;
- establishing a routine of waking and sleeping;
- having less physical contact with people who matter to you – grandparents, friends, aunts, uncles, cousins;
- having fewer opportunities to have your own personal space;
- having to switch between different platforms;
- having to be self-motivated, more self-sufficient and more independent.

For some of you this will be even more challenging as you may have family members who are key workers and/or friends and family who have been affected by Covid-19.

Whatever the circumstances and challenges, I hope you have been able to maintain a connection with your school. You should be in contact with teachers, your classmates and your friends from school each day – none of you should be feeling isolated or alone. If you are finding it difficult, remember we are here for you – we are only an email away.

As I have said to you previously it is impossible for us to replicate all your lessons at home, but your education has continued.

- All teachers are adding resources to 'Show My Homework' (SMH).
- Some teachers are adding resources to the shared drive.
- Some teachers are emailing work and feedback directly to you.
- Some teachers are directing you to work on specific websites.
- Some teachers are teaching and/or providing feedback via podcasts.
- Some teachers are providing presentations and are using voice over commentary.
- Some teachers are creating and sharing You Tube clips.
- Some teachers are delivering virtual lessons through MS Teams.

You are now on the threshold of a new phase of your education. We will officially end GCSE courses on 30th April 2020. Your teachers will no longer post work for your current teaching groups. But your education does not end here. I hope that being part of Urmston Grammar has ignited a passion for learning in each and every one of you. As you have matured, you should have started to realise that learning isn't just about being in school, it isn't something merely to be directed by your teachers – it will continue for the rest of your lives.

From **4th May 2020**, Urmston Grammar is introducing a transition programme for everyone who is going to be doing A levels at here. (If you are going on to do A levels at another school or college, it should be relatively straight forward to use our structure to support your learning.)

Year 11 into Year 12 Urmston Grammar - Transition Programme

The transition work should be completed between **4th May and 1st September 2020** – there will be approximately 30 hours per subject (in real terms this is approximately 2 hours each week for each subject).

The transition work will be a combination of:

- GCSE topics which we would expect you to be confident in prior to starting your A level;



- A level content which you can pre-learn prior to starting your courses;
- Watching online videos;
- Using online websites;
- Completing online courses;
- Reading set texts;
- Reflecting on independent reading.

For those of you who are going on to do courses that our sixth form does not offer, this will not be relevant to you. You should contact your prospective college to see what transition work they are recommending, as some of you have already done.

Remember that you still need to spend approximately 45 minutes each day doing some form of exercise; this is good for your physical and mental well-being. (The PE department will keep on suggesting ideas but remember to follow the government's guidance for where you can go outside.)

It is also important for you all to spend time reading each day; this could be fiction or non-fiction. There are links to lots of books, journals and articles on the school website <https://www.urmstongrammar.org.uk/reading-list/>

I know some of you have already taken up my challenge to get more creative. You have already started a new indoor hobby, picked up that musical instrument, practised your baking, started that new language, done some gardening. If you haven't got round to it yet, then you still have time. This will hopefully never happen again – when people ask you what **you** did during 'The Lockdown of 2020', it's important that you show that you used your time productively. (You don't want to end up saying that you slept through the whole thing!)

We may be coming to the end of this chapter in your education, but you will always be part of the Urmston Grammar community, look after yourselves and your families – take time to enjoy each other's company. Be kind to each other and to yourselves.

Keep safe and we look forward to seeing you all on GCSE results day in August.

Yours faithfully,



R S Wall on behalf of all your teachers and the support staff of Urmston Grammar.