



Dear Parents & Students,

It is now over 8 weeks ago that all our lives changed under lockdown and home learning became the new 'normal'! I wanted to write to you personally, and on behalf of the Trustees of South Manchester Learning Trust and your Local Governing Body, to say a huge thank you and well done for all your efforts in fully engaging in the regular home learning tasks and activities supplied.

We are delighted that the vast, vast majority of students are working hard every weekday, making sure that tasks are submitted on time and to the best of your ability. We also fully appreciate that parents/carers are having to juggle supporting the children with home learning, whilst looking after the whole family, keeping everyone safe and, in many cases, also attempting to work full time from home. We also appreciate that these demands can place real pressures on accessing laptops, tablets and other technology to log into home learning. Thank You!

Please continue to ask for further help and guidance where needed, whether it be from individual teachers to explain a particular task or concept, or any support with technology access, the FSM voucher system etc. We appreciate that supporting home learning can be daunting, whether it be Shakespeare, A-Level Physics, Higher Maths or just the prospect of motivating a teenager who is suffering from 2 months of not seeing their peers! The students know exactly who to contact and how to contact them, in order to access any assistance and support.

You will now be aware that, as we move into the Government's next phase of managing the Covid-19 pandemic, there are plans to very gradually start to re-open schools; although it is very evident that schools will not return to 'normal' operation, with all students present amid class sizes of between 20-30, for some very considerable time.

What I can assure you is that your Headteacher and staff are working incredibly hard in planning, risk-assessing and acting on scientific advice to consider all the changes that have to be made at school before we can accommodate larger numbers of students returning safely. School will contact you again when plans are fully in place.

Between June and the end of the academic year in mid-July the Government has proposed that there should be some "face to face" contact time with Year 10 and Year 12 students, as these are the two year groups that will be sitting GCSE and A-Level examinations in 2021. This provision is in addition to the continuing in-school provision for vulnerable students and for the children of key workers, for whom home learning is not possible. We are awaiting further Government guidance and will contact students in these year groups and their parents, once plans and dates are finalised.

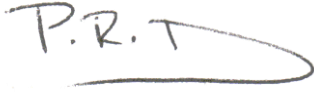
However, for all other year groups this means that home learning is highly likely to continue through to the end of the school year. Therefore, it becomes even more important that you devote set time every day to keeping up with home learning tasks, so that you have not fallen behind the learning of your peers, when you are eventually able to return to school. This is so important.

I want to give a special mention to students in Year 11 and Year 13, whose vitally important years ended so abruptly. I know that sitting your GCSEs and A-Levels is a 'rite of passage' that every young person experiences and you had that taken away from you. I know that you would have worked incredibly hard in preparation for those final exams, managed the pressure and anxiety of the exam season and then really enjoyed the celebrations that would normally follow, in terms of leavers' assembly, shirt signing, the school Prom / Sixth Form leavers' celebration and so on. I'm sure, in the not too distant future, you can at least enjoy some of these events and I sincerely hope

that you are awarded the centre assessed final grades that you feel you could have/would have achieved and those grades open the door to the next stage of your future.

So finally, thank you again for your patience while learning away from school and I hope you all stay safe, stay well and stay positive, while life slowly returns to a 'new normal'.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.R.T." followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Peter Brooks
Chief Executive Officer
South Manchester Learning Trust