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**Headteacher:** Mr J Parr BA Hons

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Dear parents and carers

I hope that this email finds you and your family safe and well as we reach the end of another week.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to parents and carers for all of the support you are providing for your son or daughter during these unprecedented times. In particular, assistance you may be providing to support home learning set by teachers through Go 4 Schools. We absolutely appreciate the difficulties involved with this and how far removed from normal education in a classroom it is. We know that the one-to-one conversations with classroom teachers, ability to put a hand up and ask a question, the class discussion and just the general feeling of being in school with peers is sorely missed. The rapid move to remote learning has posed many challenges, which I am proud to say that our staff have worked hard to overcome and continue to do so. I know that many staff are replying to students in response to emails they have received directly with queries about the online learning and providing some brief feedback following any online quizzes that have taken place.

For Year 11 students, teachers are working extremely hard within the strict and tight controls of Ofqual to contribute to the Centre Assessed Grade process, which is a complex process. Thank you therefore to parents/carer of Year 11 for adhering to the requests to not be making contact with subject teachers about grades, which ultimately will be determined by Ofqual.

As schools have 'closed' and time has moved on, teaching unions have established a framework within which schools must operate, to meet the requirements for keeping all stakeholders safe and ensuring an equitable and manageable workload for teachers and students alike. They have also shared clear expectations of practice that will not disadvantage groups of students who may not have the same access to ICT or support. Unions have also stipulated that teachers should not be expected to make contact with parents/students using personal phones or using personal email or be requesting work for marking and feedback, as would normally be the case in a school, or setting assessments formally. For this reason, our staff remain available to be contacted through their school email address, setting quizzes to maintain student engagement and keep in touch with how students are doing, including responding with encouragement and advice. Please therefore do encourage your child to drop the class teacher an email, even if just to say hello and how they are getting on with their work.

We have no idea for how long this awful situation might continue and would like nothing more than for our school to 'go back to normal'. However, even with the suggestion recently by Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, of a phased re-opening of school at some point, we do not anticipate a return to normality, which is very saddening. With this in mind and the highly likely situation that social distancing will need to be practised as far as possible within school, we may see some students still at home still

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whilst others return to school, and therefore it is important that the routine of home learning is maintained. However, whilst we try to plan for such a scenario, we are unable to make any firm plans until we receive directives from central government and unions. We have certainly got some complex planning and arrangements to put in place, but along with yourselves and your child/ren, we dearly miss a 'normal' school, where lessons and learning are supported by personal staff presence, the input of Tutors or Pastoral Leaders....actually everyone who works with children daily in school. From a smile and 'good morning!' as students walk through the door, to one-to-one conversations in the break or lunch queue about hobbies, interests, how Hereford Football Club are still not doing well (yes my team) or the general goings on in the world. We also want that back.

Recently you will have received a letter from Mr Longhurst, Assistant Headteacher, to reinforce our intent to support the well-being of your child. Further to this we are planning for other pastoral contact with your child at some point in the near future to broaden the contact that children are having with the school and let them know that we are thinking about them and are there for them.

Finally may I remind you that Friday, 8th of May is a Bank Holiday and therefore remote work will not be set for your child on this day by teachers.

Thank you once again for all that you are doing in support of your child.

With very best wishes to you and your family

John Parr  
Headteacher