

SJO/AT

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parents and carers

I am writing to you to update you on a number of changes that have been implemented at Tavistock College over the last three days.

As you will be aware, all examinations planned for January and the summer have now been cancelled. This was a very late decision, especially as on Monday we were told they would be going ahead. We responded as quickly as we could in the circumstances. I am sorry for all the inconvenience caused and the effects that this has had on our students. Summer examinations for Y11 and Y13 are now being replaced by centre assessed grades. I will be sure to communicate with you as soon as I have more information, but Y11 and Y13 students should continue working on the tasks set to assist with centre assessed grades.

Some parents have raised concerns and questions about remote learning. Thank you very much for voicing your opinions, and for the feedback. We have been working hard to address any concerns that remain. I referred to our 'infrastructure' in a previous letter. This was, in part, a reference to the broadband width. The whole school operates (due to the aged nature of its fibres) on 100Mbps. A regular house has 20Mbps. In addition, not every teacher has a computer to work from. You will be pleased to note that due to generous donations from members of the public, hardware is now available for all staff and students to use in school. In addition, we have sourced a number of 4G dongles from Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust to enable teachers to connect remotely with students much more effectively and reliably.

I am delighted to tell you that from Monday 11 January all teachers will be teaching students in their Google classroom using some live lessons, uploaded recordings and recommended resources from Oak Academy and the BBC. If students are unable to join the lessons 'live' they can watch these recordings later. During the length of the normal lesson the teacher will remain available to answer any questions and to give feedback on work through the 'chat' function. Please remember resources and work are in Google Classroom, not in Class Charts. Tutors will be offering a weekly Googlemeet to their whole tutor group so that students can check in with the tutor and see each other.

I am sure the approach will not be perfect in the first instance, but some teachers have been trying this out all week and it has worked quite well. Please bear with teachers as they upskill and learn how to use the new resources. It has been a difficult time for everyone, and students, parents and teachers have had to adapt very rapidly.

I know that there are some worries around accessing data and hardware at home. Mr Ruse sent out a link yesterday that allows some families to access free data and we still have a few chrome books that are available for students who have limited access. If there is no possibility of a student being able to work from home, they are permitted to attend school. Those students who are attending school will be receiving the same offer as those who are working from home.

Parents are quite naturally worried about their child's education. The national lockdown has not asked parents to home school their children. Remote learning is being provided. Young people, whilst largely

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very resilient, will cope differently during this time. Do not feel that all of the work must be completed, or that they have to spend the whole day working at a computer. It is perfectly acceptable to do other things, like go for a walk or learn new skills with you if you wish. The work is an offer and if it is not all completed, then this is not a problem. We will be able to pick up where students left off when we finally return to normality. For now, we are all as parents and teachers doing the best that we can do in difficult circumstances.

If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to refer them to us. You can contact the school through [office@tavistockcollege.org](mailto:office@tavistockcollege.org)

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Jones', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sarah Jones  
Principal