

# Flying high but not solo – together we will achieve



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Dear Parent/Carers,

Principal: Mrs N Walker

As we find ourselves at the mid-point of this half term, I wanted to take the opportunity to contact you to give you an overview of the work we have done to date, to both support our pupils and parents alongside providing pupils with the best remote education that we can in these continuing challenging times.

## Parent updates

Over the last week, we have delivered live parent conferences to over 150 parents with a year group specific focus. The aim of these conferences has been to support parents, as best we can, with remote learning and answer any questions as they arise. Thank you to all parents who have attended one of our events, we will continue these moving forward with specific themes each week. We hope to welcome more parents to these events in the coming weeks.

You will also find on the academy website weekly update video's informing parents of the developments we continue to make regarding our remote learning, links to all sessions can be found below and at <https://horbury.accommat.org/remotelarning/>

## Parent, pupil and staff surveys

In addition to our conferences, we have also invited our pupils, parents and staff to complete an online questionnaire in the hope that it will provide us a clear understanding of everyone's experiences of remote learning to date. I am really pleased to report that 94% of parents and carers who responded to our survey said they were happy with the remote learning provision we have in place. Further to this, there are some common themes arising from our survey responses, and our live parent conferences that we have worked to address, and will continue to do so in the coming weeks.

Outlined below are just some of the things we have worked on, in response to the feedback we have received:

Feedback suggested...	We responded by...
Pupils were wanting to engage in activities with their peers outside of their normal school day	The student council are working hard outside of lessons to provide regular updates for pupils and tips/ advice on the issues pupils maybe facing in these current times. Staff are also developing some enrichment activities which pupils can become involved in.
Pupils were experiencing screen fatigue	We have started to work with our teachers to look at ways in which we can approach

	more of a blended model of learning for pupils without losing the interaction and structure offered by our current model. We will communicate with pupils and parents ahead of any changes we make to our remote learning programme as time moves on.
Pupils were enjoying some of the more interactive elements of teaching and learning	We have worked with teachers and leaders to share best practice in relation to the interactive packages that teachers can use. We are now making more and more use of interactive whiteboards, break out rooms alongside a range of other interactive apps.
Parents who were working away from the home did not know if their children were always logging into lessons	We have developed a system to ensure that parents and carers are contacted when we are concerned a pupil or student is not logging into their lessons or fully engaging with their learning.

As time moves on we will continue to work closely with everyone to ensure that our provision remains responsive to the needs of our learners.

### **Sharing the GCSE consultation process with parents and pupils**

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January, Ofqual and the Department for Education, launched their consultation paper on how they propose the summer GCSE qualifications should be awarded for pupils who were due to sit their qualifications in the summer of 2021.

The Department for Education and Ofqual welcomes feedback from anyone who wants to respond but suggests that pupils, parents, carers and their teachers' responses will be of most interest to them. The full paper can be found on the government website. [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

I would encourage any pupil who is going to be awarded a qualification this year to think carefully about what is being proposed and provide feedback through the consultation process. The period of consultation comes to a close on 29<sup>th</sup> January at 23:45.

### **Our Virtual Presentation Evening – Watch this space!**

Like many events last year, our annual Presentation Evening which was calendared for November was cancelled due to coronavirus. Given we still find ourselves in a situation where large gatherings are still not permitted we have taken the decision to go 'virtual' with our presentation evening. Our pupils who have been recognised have received their rewards and a video celebrating their achievements, successes and hard work will be shared with you in the near future. I would like to pass on my personal congratulations to all of our prize winners. Whilst I would much prefer to have congratulated you on stage and in person, I hope our virtual event goes some way to recognising your fantastic contributions to the academy and community.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing support**

Our mental health and wellbeing support for some of our most vulnerable pupils and students has continued during this period of lockdown. Our team of Pastoral Year Leaders working alongside Miss Dixon and Mrs Cross are working hard to ensure our young people can continue to access the

support they need. If you feel your child would benefit from some support in this regard, please make contact with the Academy via [enquiries@horbury.accordmat.org](mailto:enquiries@horbury.accordmat.org) where we will direct your request to the most appropriate colleagues in order to respond.

The focus for our Parents Live Events next week is around supporting your children with mental health and wellbeing. Please join the conference if you would like further support or have any questions, using the relevant links below:

Monday 25 January	7	Mental health and well being <a href="#">Y7 MH</a>
Tuesday 26 January	8	Mental health and well-being <a href="#">Y8 MH</a>
Thursday 28 January	9	Mental health and well being <a href="#">Y9 MH</a>
Friday 29 January	11	Mental health and well being <a href="#">Y11 MH</a>
Yr10's event was on 21 January if you would like access to the information it can be found here: <a href="#">Y10 MH</a>		

I hope you have found my overview useful, and that the things the Academy is able to offer you at this time provide you with the support you need. Once again, thank you for your continued kind messages and the support you have provided to the Academy during this difficult time.

Best wishes,



Mrs N Walker

Principal