

5th January 2021



Lockdown letter

Dear parent/carer,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. Last night Boris Johnson announced that schools will only be open for children of key workers and vulnerable students until February half term, so I thought I would update you on the current situation and highlight some of the provisions available to support you.

Staying Safe The most important thing is to make sure that all of TeamTanfield stays safe. Please make sure you are following the government guidance correctly and avoiding all unnecessary travel or contact with others.

Communication The school help email is checked Monday to Friday, should parents/carers have any queries or concerns. Even though we are not always in school we aim to deal with issues in a timely manner. The school email address is: help@tanfieldschool.co.uk

Our website will keep you up to date with many things and we use Twitter/Instagram/Facebook and the Weduc app to share quick messages.

School work We appreciate that this can be difficult for parents but you have our full support in ensuring that your child keeps good routines and stays on top of their school work. What we do know is that Tanfield children are used to working hard and completing a good amount of work every day. Staff are available every working day, online, to support children with the work they have set. A reminder of how to access this work:

Remote learning instructions for years 7 and 8

- Students can access their work by going to their advisory Google Classroom e.g. Class2020-8CRY
- To access the Google Classroom students need to go to classroom.google.com and log in with their school email address and password.
- Students will follow their normal timetabled lessons and advisory meetings (These will start 10 minutes later than normal). Their timetable will be posted at the top of the 'Classwork' page in their advisory Google Classroom.
- There will be a live Google Meet link for every lesson and advisory meeting, which will allow all students to be able to access the live lesson delivered by their teacher. Lesson resources will also be posted for them under the lesson topic heading on the 'Classwork' page.
- Homework can be accessed, as normal, in their Homework Google Classroom.

Remote learning instructions for years 9, 10 and 11

This is the same as the year 7 and 8, except that they access their work by going to their lesson Google Classroom e.g. 10DBs1-C20

More information can be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/tanfieldschool.co.uk/remoteducation/bubble-or-individual-si/bubble-si?authuser=0>

The following video demonstrates the process (please note that the Google Classroom may have a different name to the one mentioned in the video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5iuslvYNRM&feature=youtu.be>

Those who are having problems accessing the work can email the help email at

help@tanfieldschool.co.uk.

We would like to thank you all for ensuring your child does the work set, to the best of their ability. **We have had 89.4% of our students attend lessons today**, which is pleasing but we are always aiming for 100%! This is really important to ensure that they don't come back to school behind their peers. Year managers will be making phone calls to any students who have not logged on.

GCSEs You will be aware that the Prime Minister mentioned last night about GCSE examinations this summer. A lot of people have interpreted it as meaning that the exams are cancelled, when in fact this is not necessarily the case. The wording was that all exams in the summer cannot go ahead as planned. Therefore, there could still be some exams, just not all of them. For example, there has been talk of students sitting one maths exam instead of three and working out a grade from that. We will have to wait for further guidance about how results will be decided. However, we would just like to reassure parents that we will be doing everything that we can to ensure students are rewarded fairly for their work. There will be a separate letter for year 11 parents about this issue. There were some real exams due to take place this half term. We have decided to withdraw students from the exams in the next two weeks, which affects the Music, Travel and Tourism, Creative iMedia, Health and Social Care and Sport Science exams. Our thinking for this was:

1. Student and staff safety. In a national lockdown situation we didn't think it was right to bring students and staff in school to mix for revision and then the exam. It wouldn't be fair to expect students to sit an exam without some revision before it. We use exam invigilators who are mainly retired and didn't think it was fair to ask them to be in a room with a bunch of students, with infection rates so high at this time.
2. We disadvantage our students. Without the revision before the exam, students may not perform as well as they could do. If they then cancel the exams in the summer, our students would be stuck with a poor grade. Last year teachers awarded students Centre Assessed Grades. We don't want our students to have real exam grades and other students across the country receiving Centre Assessed Grades.
3. There are other opportunities for students to sit these exams.

Mental health It is more important than ever to stay mentally healthy so the following is some advice to help children, but it applies to all of us:

- Get some regular exercise: Do a daily walk or bike ride.
- Eat as healthily as possible: This is a great opportunity to get your children involved in cooking!
- Keep talking: discussion is a healthy activity and a good way to help the children understand the current situation and deal with their emotions.
- We still recommend the free app called **Kooth** that has been promoted nationally for children's mental health and has been shared with our students previously.
- Our learn at home website: remoteducation.tanfieldschool.co.uk has links to the wellbeing Google Classroom and access to a secure confidential chat service with our school counsellor, Lynsey Todd, should the students need it.

Safeguarding Our normal safeguarding principles are in operation so please report any welfare concerns you have to us. Children working online need to be conscious of their safety and should remember their online safety lessons. Don't forget the report it button on our website. If anyone is having difficulties please let us know, as we may be able to help or at least direct you to the right person within the local authority. Issues can be reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead Mr Jones at cjones@tanfieldschool.co.uk or the number for Durham First Contact is 03000 267979. Finally, you can call the police on 101.

Key workers We would like to thank all the members of our community who are key workers at this time. We are all grateful for the work being done to keep supply lines running, food shops stocked, deliveries made and elderly or vulnerable people cared for as well as all the key services that keep us safe and sound. We would also like to thank you all for continuing to follow the government guidance to keep your child at home when it is safe to do so.

If you have not completed the form requesting a school place, you can complete the form here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdu7XWEbo0-t713MbtFBGF5l8VzIDtXWF29b9Nk8ghSBcKug/viewform>

Free School Meals We are looking to issue vouchers to all children in receipt of free school meals, like we have done in the past. However, we are waiting for further guidance from the Local Authority about how to do this, on this occasion. Please keep us informed of any changes to your address or contact details, in particular your email address, to ensure you receive these vouchers.

Finally We would like to thank you for your support, your kind words, and your actions. I am so proud of the way that each and every one of our students, parents, governors and fantastic staff have continued to step up to support each other in these ongoing challenging times.

On behalf of all the staff and governors of Tanfield School stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely,



Mr S Clough
Headteacher