Henlow
Church of England Academy

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Dear Year 8 Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year! I realise that this time last year, none of us envisaged a year like this or starting 2021 like this. I and the team really hope that you all managed to get a rest at Christmas and were able to celebrate, albeit in ways that were different to what you had planned. As you know, we are all adapting to changes as they occur, but I just wanted to give a short message about the next 8 days ahead and will put these as bullets just for clarity.

The online work set is not 'optional'; pupils are expected to complete it. We did make it clear to pupils before they left that if we were to be not in school after Christmas, they needed to see this as working from home rather than extra holiday.

Work will be set to cover the lessons pupils would have had, so it is best they follow **a clear routine**: A sample timetable has been included as a link in the main communication sent out earlier on. Feedback from last time showed a clear correlation between established routines and good mental health.

Attendance at assemblies and at tutor groups hangout or online lessons is also expected rather than being seen as voluntary. Tutor hangouts will be one or two times a week. Please make sure your child has opened the email invite and is able to attend.

If there are reasons (such as illness, bereavements) that work cannot be completed, please contact the subject teacher if it is just related to that subject and the tutor if it is across the board who will let staff know. As always, please do contact your child's tutor in the first instance with any concern or query.

If you run into problems getting your child organised or getting work done, please do contact the tutor who may be able offer a hangout to help organise and keep an eye on progress so your child knows their tutor is watching over them and keeping a 'special eye'!

Please keep in mind that **many staff will be in school teaching the key worker children full time** as well as managing online teaching and may not be able to respond to emails or check work as quickly.

Although not always easy, please do your best to ensure your child has **a quiet space to work**. Some parents brought in garden furniture and made work corners in their hall or lounge in the last lockdown which helped. Many parents found that having their children work in a public space rather than their bedroom was more conducive to work.

Feedback from parents from the last lockdown made it very clear that **pupils will find it difficult (impossible!) to work with distractions such as mobile phones, games, TV etc**. What seemed to be most effective is where these were used as a reward once work had been completed. Using social media, games and TV as an incentive was a key factor in creating motivation in some otherwise somewhat reluctant students! As parents, you are in charge of (and pay for) these devices and access so please do take charge of them or they will 'run the show'; this is our experience from last time.

Thank you in advance for your support with this; I know it can be hard to juggle all of the different pressures that we have to face in the current circumstances.

Kind regards,

Gareth Baxter
Head of Year 8