

Dudley Academies Trust

Executive offices, Dudley College of Technology
Priory Villa, 3a Ednam Road, Dudley, West
Midlands, DY1 1HL
Chair of Board of Trustees: Lowell Williams
Chief Executive: Jo Higgins



19/03/20

Dear Parents/ Carers

Re: **Coronavirus update (COVID-19) #3**

We are all facing completely uncharted territory as we contemplate the changes ahead and respond to Gavin Williamson's announcement that he gave yesterday as our Secretary of State for Education. I can reassure you that everyone at Dudley Academies Trust is fully committed to supporting all of our learners and their families as we contemplate the many challenges ahead of us. Each of our five academies is undoubtedly benefitting from being a member of our family of schools and we are certainly much stronger together.

With your support, the majority of our learners will be able to engage with a wide variety of distance learning materials. Learning platforms and content will be regularly updated. This can be accessed through the website by clicking on the Curriculum tab. Should you have any queries about this then please email the helpline for your academy.

The Secretary of State issued vitally important guidance on how schools can step up to support front line workers, many of whom are parents and carers, and our most vulnerable members of our student body. We are absolutely committed to stepping up to the plate and doing everything possible to help. I am very pleased to report our approaches.

Our provision: Dudley Academies Trust Futures Programme (DAT Futures)

The Secretary of State advises that there is likely to be approximately 10% of learners who require schools and academies to remain open so that they can provide an onsite education and support programme; this also runs through the Easter holiday period. This provision will help parents and carers who are on the 'front line' in battling COVID-19 and the programme will also meet the needs of our most vulnerable young people who need to be in a school setting.

We are so fortunate to have the outstanding Dudley College of Technology as our sponsor and we are in the process of designing an exciting programme of education. The 'DAT Futures' programme which will run at the Evolve campus for all learners who need to be in an educational setting. The programme will be project based and focus on helping our learners plan for their exciting futures through experiencing a range of thematic experiences in the cutting edge facilities of Dudley College.

All projects will include aspects of literacy, numeracy, communication skills and confidence building. Our five core values will also run through all programmes of study. Learners will be able to transfer their knowledge and skills acquired from the projects to all of their subjects when academy life returns to normal.

The first month's curriculum will be structured as follows:

Week one

- Monday 23rd & Tuesday 24th March 2020: academy based to enable learners to fully prepare for the 'Futures Programme'.



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- Wednesday 25th March to Friday 27th March 2020: **‘Voyage of Discovery’** the space project based at the Evolve building.

Week 2

- Monday 30th March to Friday 3rd April 2020: **‘Our Black Country Roots’**, the history project drawing on staff and resources from the Black Country Living Museum.

Week 3

- Monday 6th April to Thursday 9th April 2020: **‘Speak out Loud’**, the reading project where learners have an opportunity to enjoy a range of literature and build up their reading and performance skills.

Week 4

- Tuesday 14th to Friday 17th April 2020: **‘Let’s get physical’**, a health and wellbeing project giving learners an opportunity to engage in some outdoor sports (these will of course be appropriate given current restrictions due to COVID-19).

Teachers across our academies supported by subject specialists from our central team are already working on the next month’s programme and details will be shared with you once it has been created.

Delivery of the programme

The programme will be delivered by teachers from across the Trust whose subject specialism is appropriate for the particular project. We will also aim to provide teaching assistant support for learners with additional needs. There will also be staff who are Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure that safeguarding remains our number one priority. We will ensure that learner to teacher ratios are appropriate.

Organisation of the programme - The academy day

08:15	Staff will be ready to welcome learners to the Evolve building.
09:00	Official start of the day (learners will be registered).
10:45	Morning break.
11:15	Programme resumes.
12:30	Lunch
13:00	Afternoon session.
14:00	End of day.

Please note that learners will be required to attend for the full day and will also be required to stay at the Evolve campus at all times. Staff will supervise break and lunch. A packed lunch will be provided for all learners.

Are you interested in the ‘Futures Programme’ for your child?

If you would like your child to attend the programme, please complete the registration from which can be accessed via your academy website under COVID-19 Updates. In order to help us plan, we would really appreciate your prompt response so that we can organise staffing. Please complete the online form by 15:00 on Friday 20th March 2020 or at your earliest convenience.



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Year 11 Examinations

There will be no examinations this year. The Department for Education will issue guidance on how learners will be graded and the aim is for learners to receive their certificates in August 2020, at this stage. I will issue an update as soon as possible on this vitally important matter. In the meantime, please continue to encourage your child to follow their distance learning programme. They must keep learning and progressing in preparation to move onto their post 16 pathway. Please reassure your child that they are all fantastic young people and they have our support at this time. We are fully aware of how hard they have worked and we really encourage them to continue to do so.

What next?

As you will appreciate, our lives seem to be changing on a daily basis. I will therefore ensure that you continue to receive regular briefings. I would like to thank you for your support. I hope that you and your families stay safe and well.

Yours faithfully

Jo Higgins
Chief Executive



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