

16th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

2020 has been a challenging year, and Rockwood has risen to that challenge. We could not have done it without you. I would like to thank everyone in the Rockwood community for their efforts: teachers, support staff, parents, carers and, most of all, our students.

We have all had to adapt to new approaches to education. Looking back at the year, it is remarkable how far we have come. Using the internet, we can now teach in so many different ways: teachers at school teaching students in their homes, teachers at home teaching students at school, teachers at home teaching students at home. The combinations of different ways we have taught seems endless! It is your hard work which has made it work so well.

At Rockwood, 2020 has been remarkable for the amount of awards we have received. As part of CORE Education Trust's Echo Eternal Holocaust memorial project, we have won a Pearson National Teaching Award: The Gold Award for Impact Through Partnership. This was especially exciting as the result was announced on BBC1's *The One Show*!

We have received wider recognition for our work on Holocaust education: UCL's Holocaust Education Centre awarded us with their prestigious Quality Mark, and we are one of very few schools in the country to have achieved this accolade. We will continue to educate our students and the wider community about this difficult and important topic.

In addition, a UNICEF accreditor visited the school (virtually, of course!) and awarded us with their Silver Award as a 'rights respecting' school. This is testament to the hard work of our staff and students in promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It will not be long before I am writing in a future newsletter about how we have achieved Gold!

At Rockwood, we have thought carefully about what support our students need to navigate these challenging times. Outside of school, so many activities which students would normally take part in have been closed: they can't go to community clubs, football and swimming groups, or any other of the various activities they would previously have enjoyed. So at school we have tried to bridge that gap. All our students in year 7 have had a day off normal timetable to take part in outdoor activities here on the Rockwood site - including archery and paintballing! In this last week of term, students from all year groups have taken part in a specially-organised Wellness Week.

Our curriculum has continued throughout the year and it has been a pleasure to see students develop skills in across many different subjects. Excitingly, with our new building, we have the rooms and space to add to the range of subjects students can study: from 2021, students will be able to study Design & Technology in our brand new workshop and dance in our brand new studio!

This is one of many fantastic developments we are looking forward to in the new year. And it promises to get off to an exciting start, with the formal opening of our new building and the launch of the Echo Eternal Festival on the 7th January. We have decided to name it the Mady Gerrard Building, in honour of the Holocaust survivor, and our friend, who has done so much to teach our students, and as part of our commitment to honor her words. We will share with you the different digital and socially distanced ways that you can be part of the festival and on the 7th itself you'll be able to see our building as we light it up as a beacon of hope. The beacon will mark the start of the daily commemoration leading up to the screening of the Horizons21 film on 26th January, which will feature our students, and Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th January.

Uniform

The Rockwood Academy uniform is an important part of the culture and ethos of our school. High standards of dress at all times represents a level of pride in our school and a reflection of the attitudes our students have towards their education. Should you need to stock up over the holidays, the uniform supplier has confirmed that stock is available from

Clive Marks, <https://www.clivemark.co.uk/shop-by-school/r/rockwood-academy.html> and Trutex, Erdington <https://www.trutex.com/>

Year 7 students are expected to be in full new uniform on 4th January 2021. Due to the change in logo, the academy will be buying blazers for students in Years, 8, 9 and 10. A link will be sent to parents/carers of these year groups to confirm the size of blazer required.

Students need to wear their PE uniform on the day they have PE timetabled as the changing facilities will be closed. In order to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus, please ensure all clothing including uniform is washed frequently in line with government guidance.

Keeping students and staff safe from COVID-19

- We will continue to act on the guidance from the government.
- To help us reduce the risk of infection, we will not be able to receive visitors or parents until further notice. During the day, we ask that parents communicate with us only via telephone on 0121 566 6500 or email enquiry@rockwood-academy.co.uk
- We continue to have a stock of PPE if required in an emergency.
- We will be following the government's direct guidance on what to do if a student or staff member has suspected coronavirus symptoms or is confirmed to have the virus.
- Please continue to support by ensuring the three simple actions we must all do to keep on protecting each other:
 - Wash hands** - keep washing your hands regularly
 - Cover face** - wear a face covering in enclosed spaces
 - Make space** - stay at least 2 metres apart - or 1 metre with a face covering or other precautions

Important Dates

Friday 18th December 2020	All students will finish by 12.30pm Year 7 leave 12.00 Year 8 leave 12.05	Year 10 leave 12.15 Year 11 leave 12.15 Year 9 leave 12.30
Monday 4th January 2021	Students in Years 7, 8 and 11 are expected to arrive at 9.45am Students in Years, 9 and 10 are expected to arrive at 10.00am	
Monday 4th to Friday 15th January 2021	Year 11 Mock Exams	
Thursday 7th January 2021	INSET day – academy closed to students	
Friday 8th January 2021	All students return as normal at their staggered time	

School Day for Each Year Group					
Year Group	Arrival time:	Break	Lunch	Finish time:	Entrance/Exit *
Year 7	08.45	11.00	12.50	15.00	Main Entrance Walkway
Year 8	08.40	11.00	12.20	15.05	Front Entrance Left
Year 9	08.40	11.00	12.20	15.05	Main Entrance Walkway
Year 10	08.40	11.00	13.20	16.00	Front Entrance Right
Year 11	08.40	11.00	13.20	16.00	Front Entrance Right

* The new building has created additional entrances for each year group, which allows us to manage arrivals in line with Government guidance. These will be clearly marked.

Events in Spring Term 1

January & February 2021

- STEM – Faraday Investigation
- STEM – Dell Workshop
- STEM – Jeep Workshop
- Student Council Meeting
- Echo Eternal Campaign
- Year 11 Parents' Evening
- Year 8 Options Evening
- Echo Eternal Horizons

It has been a great end to the term and I wish you and your family a restful Christmas break and Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



Sofia Darr
Headteacher