

Dear Parent and Carer

I am delighted that the vast majority of our students are now getting used to the systems for engaging with remote learning and are also getting better at communicating in appropriate and formal ways in live lessons.

Our expectations for the quality of remote learning are high as you would expect and all our pupils are expected to engage fully in their learning, participating actively every lesson, every day. They are expected to submit their work to their teachers for assessment when asked to do so by them.

### **Learning Consolidation Days**

However, we are conscious that the intensity of sequences of live lessons can be a drain on the mental health and wellbeing of our students and their teachers. Effective remote learning as described above requires high levels of focus and concentration for students and thorough and careful planning from their teachers. Students (and teaching staff) are under pressure to stay on top of their learning, juggle the demands of printing, getting into and out of lessons, submitting work and dealing with emails and OneDrive documents. This is resulting in long periods of time spent in a sedentary position fixed to a live lesson on a screen. We know that this method of delivering remote learning provides a level of structure and rigidity that helps students to manage their days and is also easier for parents to oversee. However, we are also aware of how intense this is for families and students on a daily basis and are conscious it could also be creating additional wellbeing and physical health issues for some students.

Therefore we are proposing the introduction of Learning Consolidation Days when necessary to provide students with the time to catch-up on work, submit outstanding assignments, revise and consolidate their learning and have the opportunity to explore issues in more depth or, if they are on top of all their work to engage in some structured extra-curricular activity which we will outline.

On these days there will be no live lessons or new learning as teachers use this time to check, monitor and assess student engagement and if necessary contact individual students. Learning will continue for students as there will be outstanding assignments to complete, teachers may set work to be done on that day and there are the many resources that are available at all times for your child (Bedrock, MyMaths, Bitesize, Oak National Academy etc.) but there will also be a programme of wellbeing activities that will be available in advance of the day for your child to plan their day around if they are on top of their work and have no other learning consolidation to do. *Learning Consolidation days are **not** days of no learning.* There remains a full day of learning for students, but with less of a sense of intensity and more control from the student over their learning.

We will be able to use these days to gather pupil engagement data, plan, assess and notify parents of any areas of concern.

Students attending school for Key Worker and Vulnerable Student provision will follow the same Learning Consolidation as students working from home.

Our first Learning Consolidation Day will be **Wednesday 10th February**.

Our second Learning Consolidation Day will be **Tuesday 9th March**.

We hope that this is something that will be valued by your child and will provide a little respite from the hamster wheel of live lessons as they will be able to manage their own learning a bit more on these days.

## **Remote Learning Feedback Survey**

We are interested to know a little bit more about how your child feels about their remote learning, so we would really appreciate it if you could sit down with your child and work with them to [complete this short survey](#). This will be really helpful to us.

[Click here for to complete the My Remote Learning Survey](#)

## **The Big Balshaw's Careers Week Event**

Our annual careers event is one which has grown in size each year and students and parents have said what a useful and informative event it is.

The event will take place over the course of a whole week this year with a huge menu of activities and resources that you can select from.

Careers week will take place week beginning Monday 8th February and you will get details with all links to relevant resources and meetings from Mr Melling very soon. Each day will have a particular theme with input from a huge range of local and national employers:

- Introduction (CV writing tutorials, post-16 education, transferable skills and more)
- STEM Careers - led by Leyland Trucks plus input from the Army about following a career path through the Army
- Healthcare/Veterinary/Social Care - input from the NHS and others for the huge range of careers from surgeon to physio to medical receptionist.
- Legal, Business and Finance - Led by Harrison Drury with mock interviews and the chance to virtually meet with trainee solicitors.
- Apprenticeships - What are T-levels, Amazing Apprenticeships and more...

It is never too early to think about the future. You probably don't have a clear idea of what you want to be, but that's fine - people rarely do! However, the more you can find out about what's out there, the better.

## Exams / When will schools open?

I know that many of you will be hoping that I will be able to give you further information about these issues. The simple fact is that we don't know yet.

You will see that our second Learning Consolidation day is planned for Tuesday 9th March which is a day after Boris Johnson suggested that schools might return. We feel that it is wise to plan for this not happening on the 8th March even though we fervently hope that schools can return as soon as possible so we can all get out from behind our computer screens and deal with human beings again!

I know that many families of Balshavians are dealing with significant illnesses within their close families at the moment with many seriously ill with Covid. We are remembering you all in our prayers and thank all those of you who are praying for the school. Lifting our prayers to the Lord feels like the most positive intervention that any of us can undertake at this time - He is always ready to listen.

Take care and stay safe,

Kind regards from all the staff at Balshaw's.

Mr Steven Haycocks

HEADTEACHER  
BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119, vs 105)