



08 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you are well and that your child has had a successful week with their home learning. We are really grateful for all you are doing to support remote learning. I know this won't be easy for you when you may be working from home, have younger children to look after and are trying to keep on top of the mess that young people can create when they are in the house for the whole day!

We are awaiting further guidance from Ofqual and the Department for Education about how exam results will be awarded this year. Once we have more information we will provide an update to parents and carers of students who were due to sit exams this year. At this stage, it is vital that all of these students continue to fully engage with the online learning that is provided.

Online Learning

We are continuing to develop our online learning for students and I wanted to update you on the next stage of this work. From Monday 11 January lessons will be delivered in the following ways:

Year 10 – Year 13 Students

In all lessons teachers will deliver 'live' content during their timetabled lessons. This will be accessed through Google Meet, which is part of Google Classroom. Updated videos will be uploaded to the school website today to explain how students can access Google Meet. Mr Coleman will send parents/carers of Sixth Form students some further information about how sixth form students should access these lessons. Lessons will involve a variety of approaches, dependent on subject. At the end of their live input teachers will set an independent learning task that should take at least 20 minutes for your child to complete.

Core PE lessons will not be delivered in this way, but teachers will continue to set tasks for students to complete. Any PE exam groups will have the 'live' input. All work should be submitted following the instructions that teachers will give.

Year 7 – Year 9 Students

Teachers will continue to upload online learning activities to Google Classroom in line with the normal timetable which your child has in their planner. They will be available to provide support and answer questions through the 'stream' facility as they have been doing for this week. Some teachers may also deliver the 'live' content described above. Teachers will set an independent learning task that should take at least 20 minutes for your child to complete. All work should be submitted following the instructions that teachers will give.

For all lessons, regardless of year group, the only time this won't happen is when a colleague is unable to work because of illness and we have to set cover work. This will be posted in Google Classroom.

HEADTEACHER: Mr David Hewitt, BA (Hons), NPQH

DEPUTY HEAD: Mr A Haigh, BSc (Hons)

DEPUTY HEAD: Ms C Mann, BA (Hons)

“Working together to achieve success”

Timings for all lessons will remain at

- Period 1: 9.15 – 9.55
- Period 2: 10.10 – 10.50
- Period 3: 11.30 – 12.10
- Period 4: 12.25 – 13.05
- Period 5: 14.15 – 14.55

This means that all students will have at least 5 hours of learning each day (40 minute lesson + minimum of 20 minute independent learning for each timetabled lesson.)

Why are we taking this approach?

We are working hard to make sure that students have an online learning offer that engages them effectively, but is also manageable for students, their families and teachers. Many of our teachers are juggling delivering lessons with home schooling their own children or looking after infants. Teachers are also at different levels of expertise with technology. None of us are experts yet in delivering 'live' online lessons. By taking the blended approach described above we can effectively develop our expertise.

We do not want students or teachers to sit at a screen for extended periods of time. Please encourage your child to have a quick break from learning between lessons 1 and 2 and lessons 3 and 4. They should have a proper break between lessons 2 and 3 and have lunch between lesson 4 and 5. If they can go outside in a garden for some of these breaks this will be even better.

There is a lot of evidence to support the needs for breaks from screen use that we shouldn't ignore.

The independent learning activities don't need to be completed straight away at the end of the lesson, but should be completed by the end of the school day. This will give your child some flexibility about how they structure their learning to best fit with the household routines that you will be developing. Importantly, it will also help them develop their independent learning skills further.

We are expecting all students to engage with their lessons at the times that are set. Many of our students developed nocturnal habits in the last lockdown as they could choose when to access learning activities. This is not helpful and can lead to mental health issues developing.

Many of the learning activities can be accessed through a mobile phone or tablet. There is some guidance on the internet about accessing Google Classroom through an Xbox or Play Station. We have experimented with this, but had mixed results. You may want to have a look at this. You will need a computer keyboard and mouse to do this.

If you do not have enough electronic devices to enable your children to access their lessons at the correct times please contact your child's pastoral leader who will look at how we can help.

What can parents and carers do to help their child engage effectively with online learning?

- Make sure your child is set up ready to start learning in good time before the start of period 1
- Reinforce our expectations about completing work during the school day
- Monitor your child's progress during the day
- Make sure that your child behaves appropriately online so that they do not disturb the learning of others. Teachers will use a staged approach to deal with any disruption and all lessons will be recorded so that we can follow up any issues. Please ensure that your child has their camera and microphone turned off when they are in Google Meet, unless their teacher asks them to turn these on as part of the lesson.

Pastoral Care

We have already contacted a number of our students to help them deal with issues accessing learning. Over the next two weeks Form Tutors or a member of your child's pastoral team will contact you to speak with your child and check how they are coping with online learning. As many of these phone calls will be made from home or personal mobile phones the number will be blocked. Please do not ignore these calls as colleagues have limited time to contact students between lessons.

If you require further pastoral support for your child please contact their Year team in the first instance.

COVID19 Testing

We are continuing to develop our ability to administer COVID 19 tests in school and are being supported by the Public Health team to do this. We hope to have testing for all staff working in school set up next week and also contact testing for key worker and vulnerable students who are working in school. We will provide more information about this to the parents/carers of these children shortly. No testing will be carried out without consent been given; it is voluntary.

Key events in school

- We have cancelled the Year 11 and Year 13 mock exams that were due to run this half term. Once we know more about the grading process for exams we will make a decision about how these will run when students are back in school
- Information about Post 16 subjects that will help Year 11 students make informed choices about Sixth Form courses for next year will be posted on our website next week. Students have access to the Unifrog website where they can research courses, careers and local other providers for courses such as apprenticeships
- The Year 11 Parent/Carer Evening (Thursday 28 January) and Year 12 Parent/Carer Evening (04 February) will be held online. Information will be sent to parents/carers of these students.
- We are making some adjustments to our Year 9 Option process as we were expecting our Year 9 students to be back in school this term so that we could talk to them face to face about this process. More information will follow about the timescales for this.

Thank you again for all you are doing to support your child's learning at home – it is greatly appreciated.

Stay safe and well.

Best wishes



Dave Hewitt
Headteacher