

10 June 2020

Information and support for students and families during Phase Three of the virtual learning platform - 1st June to 22nd July

Hello everyone, we hope that you are all keeping well.

We are in the second week of Phase Three of virtual/home learning. Thank you for supporting the learning at home. We appreciate you keeping in touch with us with your positive feedback and with queries about how to further support the learning that takes place in your home. We share everything with our teachers and I know that they appreciate the time that you take to communicate with us.

At present, our virtual provision is centred on retrieving and embedding the learning that our children have already encountered in school. We also want to stretch their thinking by broadening the content of the topics that they are studying so that they can apply their understanding to a range of situations, questions and scenarios. For the majority of subjects we are not introducing new elements of the curriculum or in the case of Year 9 and 10, new examination topics at this point. As such, we are making sure that the learning already done in the classroom is firmly locked into memory. This is under constant review and we will respond accordingly as and when we receive advice from our examination boards.

Our teachers spend much of their working day planning and resourcing the online lessons, feeding back to their classes, creating Loom videos, contacting home as a class teacher and as a form tutor, teaching in the childcare provision at based at LSA, creating resources and delivering to the homes of our most vulnerable learners so that they have what they need to feel supported during this challenging period. If you have had the chance to watch any of our Loom videos I'm sure you'll agree that the quality of them is excellent and you will see an increase in this provision over the next couple of weeks. In addition to this our teachers and staff are developing their own professional practice through online training. They are also supporting other schools to enhance their virtual provision through networking and sharing good practice. Please be reassured that we still work closely with some families to support their pastoral needs as well as their academic needs.

There are two main developments in Phase Three:

1. The **new timetable** which suggests a pattern of subjects for you to follow each day. This sits alongside a submission day for each subject. A regular timetable helps you to structure your day and helps us to plan our feedback to our children.
2. **An increase in teacher digital interaction** with virtual learning through 'Loom' videos to encourage stronger engagement and create a closer-to-classroom feel.

We recognise that some of our children are very comfortable with virtual/home learning and enjoy the challenge. They find it easy to self-regulate and can be left to it for most of the session. However, this is not the case for all families and this might cause tension whilst your family tries to get the right balance of learning and harmony at home. You will see from the questions raised that you are not alone with this.

1. Why have you introduced a timetable and what happens if we can't complete all of it in a day?

Our children are used to the flow of 5 periods of learning across a day. This helps to structure their day and encourage some self-regulation. We recognise that this is challenging at home so we have brought it down to 4 periods. Each session is only 45 minutes long. This will ensure that all subjects are visited and that the memory/retrieval for each subject is kept fresh. If you cannot achieve 4 periods then start with 2 and try to increase this over 2 weeks. We strongly recommend that you encourage your child to get up and log into learning before 10am to keep a routine and also because we know that the brain is at its most receptive in the morning.

2. How much should I write/submit/produce for each subject?

Your teacher will instruct and advise you at the start of the lesson. However, we would encourage you to submit work even if it is unfinished. This is because your teacher can then give you feedback and help you to improve your answer or your thinking.

3. I'm really struggling to get my child out of bed and to log on to the virtual platform.

You're not alone. Consistent routines are important for home learning. You will need to set this expectation with your children to suit the day and the rhythm within your family. Any attempt at a routine needs to be recognised and praised. There is no expectation that you act as their teacher. You do not need to get directly involved with the work set. If you can get them engaged and provide a quiet space for them to work you are being a supportive parent or carer.

4. How can I engage a little more with the learning day?

You will have your own working/caring/shielding day to attend to but there are a few simple techniques you can use to encourage your child to regulate their approach: before they start a task, ask them to talk to you for 4-5 minutes about their plan, afterwards ask how it worked. You can quiz them at the end of the day on a topic. Ask them what they would like to be quizzed on so they can prepare.

We like to work alongside **The Education Endowment Foundation** and they encourage the use of a technique called TRUST

- **T**: Take turns to make plans and predictions before starting a task
- **R**: Recap their ideas and understanding with them
- **U**: Use encouragement and praise for routine, effort and completion
- **S**: Share prior knowledge, 'is this like anything else you have learned in this topic?'
- **T**: Tune-in and listen. Be curious about their learning.

5. Will my child fall behind if they don't complete everything set?

The educational rationale behind the work that we are doing at LSA is based on current, robust research. We read and listen every day to what the leading educationalists across the globe are saying about home learning during lockdown. The overwhelming evidence is that we have to lock into memory all of the learning that has already been done and give our children plenty of opportunity to try their knowledge out in different situations and scenarios. If your child does not access home learning they will not miss any new topics at this point. However, they will miss the chance to embed learning. If they can't remember what they have learned they will not be able to succeed in any method of testing and this will impact on their confidence and well-being. Any time spent on the virtual platform will be beneficial and will help them to return to the classroom feeling more confident and ready to work with new learning.

6. How are you developing and increasing your communication with students in the virtual school?

Each year group have had an assembly and a digital update called 'LSA values.' This has been used to share how we are all, as a community, thinking about our core values of: Respect, Integrity, Aspiration and Endeavour. Video assemblies have been produced for each of the year groups to communicate what should be happening at home regarding how to undertake remote learning through Satchel: One. It has also been a platform to share success of pupils' work and we have specifically used it to show how pupils are doing in their form challenges, including the recent reading challenge. The assemblies have also been used to highlight our core values and promote a positive mind-set by using our 5 ways to wellbeing.

7. How are you developing your work in Satchel: One?

During Phase 1 (before Easter) we focused on the retrieval of information that had previously be learnt in the classroom. In Phase 2 (after Easter) we further enhanced retrieval tasks with stimulate tasks, enrich activities and reading. We also developed marking and feedback by the use of whole class and individual marking based on submissions from pupils through Satchel:One. We also developed success by using 'Class Charts' to award achievement points.

In Phase 3, we have started producing pre-recorded, subject specific videos using '**Loom**' (a web-based piece of software that enables us to capture the screen as well as narrate). Loom will allow teachers not only to deliver the content of the lesson in a style familiar to our children but also allow the teacher to use clear examples to support modelling of a particular question to further support pupils learning. In the coming weeks, we expect to see an increase in the quantity of Loom videos being produced by our teachers. Further development in both Satchel:One and in Looms is enabling us to offer a very high standard of provision for our children. When we surveyed students it appears that they have really started to bed down and regulate their learning time at home.

We have also been trialling the use of **Microsoft Teams** with a number of year 10 groups to enable us to have a live style lesson. Teams will allow pupils to use their Office365 log in to join their class online. In trials carried out so far, students have been able to see and hear the teacher through a live video link which has allowed the teacher to talk, teach and assess work. The students have then had the option to use audio to speak and feedback to the teacher and the class. However, use of this facility needs to meet stringent safeguarding measures. We have already encountered a small amount of inappropriate behaviour and activity whilst trialling live teaching. This has the potential to leave teachers vulnerable. However, we are working on this with our safeguarding team over the next few days to ensure our practice is safe before we extend our provision of this interface. In a school the size of LSA a singular diet of live teaching will not meet the needs of all of our families and students. We will continue to develop our blended learning approaches to ensure that we support the needs and development of each and every one of our learners.

Thank you for your continued support. We will be in touch as we develop our provision.

Danell Dearden and Nick Bracken
Assistant & Associate Assistant Headteacher
Lytham St Annes High School