



# WHYTRIG MIDDLE SCHOOL

One of the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools

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## School Update – Remote Learning

Dear Parent or Carer

We hope that you are all safe and well and that the learning today and over the course of this week has gone well. We are, as always, aware of the great challenges families in our community are experiencing and are continually grateful for the assistance you are giving to your children and the support you have given to school during this time. We are confident that the weeks ahead can be a productive time for all of our pupils as we learn together in this environment. Our hope is that the following information will help pupils, parents and staff to be on the same page as we work through the first half of the Spring Term.

### **Remote learning**

At Whytrig Middle School we are using Google Classroom as the platform to set online learning for your children. When we closed in March 2020, we knew very little of what to expect in the weeks ahead but since then we have made significant strides in our understanding of this platform and how it can be used to support the children with their learning. As a school we are working continuously to improve the learning provision we are offering in the remote environment. We will use a variety of resources to support the learning including recorded material (some produced from established online learning website and some prepared in house by our own staff as they upskill in this area), learning platforms we subscribe to as well as other resources appropriate to each subject. It is therefore vitally important that the children are logged on to their school accounts each day to access their work, as our intention is to ensure learning is not lost during this period of lockdown. The children who attend the provision for Key Worker and Vulnerable pupils each day will follow the same course of learning as the children accessing the work at home. Children should **READ ALL THE RELEVANT INFORMATION** that is in the lesson task so they know exactly what they should be doing.

### **Scheduling of learning**

Google Classroom allows staff to create work, so that it appears in a child's classroom on a given date (and time). With this in mind, children should check in on a daily basis and access each of their classrooms. Classroom names appear as they would on the school timetable eg. 6w-Ma1-2020/2021 is a year 6 Maths class. They shouldn't panic if they can't see work for a whole week, it might be down to the scheduling. Work will usually be set for the day that the lesson would take place on and staff will indicate when the work should be completed by. Unfortunately there may be times where things are not right; please let our reception know if there are problems and we will aim to put things right as soon as we can. For example, we have had technical issues with Music and SMSC lessons in Key Stage 3 classes this week, which are now resolved for future learning. We still have a number of children who have not accepted all of their classrooms – they must ensure they are 'active' in all the classrooms they have.

### **Resources for remote learning**

In school Key Stage 2 Maths lessons we now use a resource called Power Maths with the children in which they complete some of their work in Practice Books which the school has purchased for them. This week we have messaged parents of children in Years 5 and 6 to collect these books from our school reception so that they can fully engage with lessons from next week. If you have not already done so, please collect your child's book at your earliest convenience on Monday. The children will be expected to return their books to school at the end of the lockdown period and will be expected to keep work and presentation to the same standards as we expect when work takes place in the classroom. In some Year 7 classes we have arranged for Reading books to be collected which will be needed for some of the home learning set.

## **Useful information in google classroom year groups**

In each year group we have added an 'Information' class this week which your child has been invited into. In it they will find logon information for some of the platforms we use like Power Maths, MyMaths, Times Tables Rock Stars in Key Stage 2, Pearson Maths in Key Stage 3 and myOn and Accelerated Reader in all year groups. We will add to these areas as and when necessary.

## **Response from Renaissance Place about myOn issues**

The following is a statement released by the provider about some software issues users have been experiencing this week:

*To answer your questions; we have had some reports over the last couple of days with Schools having some issues with myON so are working to try and rectify some of these issues. If this issue persists, please call our Customer Services team on 0207 184 4000 who will be able to escalate this for you if needed.*

*In regard to the different book levels on myON, this will depend on what package of books that you have available to you. At the point of purchase, school will choose to invest in different packages of myON books that are at different levels depending on their individual needs. Because of this, it may be that you don't have books that go above the level 6.*

## **Handing in work**

When a child has finished their work they should click on 'Turn In' on the top right of the screen because if they do not it will show as missing, even though they may have completed the work. For some tasks staff may ask for evidence of work completed such as a photo of a paper based task which can be attached before 'turning in'. Where online tasks are set in another platform such as Pearson Maths or MyMaths, the children should still 'turn in' the work to show that it has been completed.

## **Responding to messages**

Whilst individual messaging is lovely and staff really want to know how children are getting on, we would encourage pupils to use the stream to ask questions, rather than private comments. Due to the nature of some queries which may apply to several children, asking in the stream will be seen by all and will ensure staff can respond to more people than responding to the same question on multiple occasions. We do appreciate how difficult it is for some children who would like immediate feedback, but they should also be aware that they may be messaging on occasions where staff are in school fulfilling their rota duties; on those occasions they will respond as soon as they can.

## **Remote learning feedback**

When a child's work is marked as returned, that is the indication to the children that it has been seen by the member of staff. For some activities it might also be appropriate for staff to give feedback, to address a learning misconception or make suggestions for the children to improve their work, or maybe just to give well deserved praise. Not all activities will be scored. The default setting in Google Classroom is for a score of 100 to be applied, which sometimes gets left on but is not always appropriate for the activity. For some activities scores will be amended to match an exercise or a score is simply not appropriate and will be omitted.

## **Engagement with learning**

Each week staff will be asked to complete an engagement report for every pupil that they teach. Where concerns are raised, we will contact parents or carers to identify if there are any barriers to learning and to identify support which can be given to get their child back on track. At present we have no idea how long this lockdown will last, although the initial indication by the Prime Minister at his press conference on Monday suggested it would at least be until February half term. It is therefore essential that children engage with the work being set so to minimise gaps in their learning. Staff have been really impressed with the quality of work so far this week that has been handed in and can see how hard those children are trying!

As stated in our communication on Tuesday information will regularly be sent out to parents and uploaded on the school website at <https://www.svf.org.uk/news/2021-01-05-covid-19-updates>. Please check this page often in case messages are missed. We would also respectfully request that parents and carers update contact information when it changes in order to ensure messages can be received.

We appreciate what a stressful time this will be and our hope is by working together we can keep the stresses related to remote learning to a minimum for everyone involved. We hope everyone has a fantastic weekend and a very well deserved rest!

Yours sincerely

Mr J K Souter  
Head of School