

11th January 2021

Dear Parent and Carer

One week ago we were preparing to come back to school and carry out the mass testing of all students and staff. However, we now find ourselves starting the second week of 'Remote Learning' and once again our parents, carers and siblings find themselves thrust into a new role as a supporting teacher. Thank you for everything you are doing to help with this. We know it is not easy and especially when there is more than one child to support and you might also be working from home yourself and sharing resources and that all important work space.

Due to the 2020 'Lockdown', we all now know a lot more about remote learning than we did then. During that time there was some very helpful research done by the Education Endowment Fund looking specifically at which practices were the most useful for supporting learning from home. This was very important in helping to form our new 'Blended Learning Policy'. The link to this research and a summary of the key points are included as an Appendix at the end of this letter, for your information.

Since March 2020, we have been integrating Google Classroom into our normal timetable of lessons, using it to set homework and to provide students with resources and lesson plans. During this present Lockdown, we will once again be providing online provision through Google Classroom and this brings with it many questions about the best way for students to learn at home. The truth is that the best approach will vary from student to student and will depend on their access to IT, the space and resources they have at home, the subjects they are studying and their preference to different styles of work.

Our approach will be to offer a range of learning tasks which will include:

- Some extended independent tasks that may take several hours to complete.
- Some shorter learning tasks to test memory and recall.
- Some 'live interaction' with their teacher which may include whole class feedback on work completed, an explanation of work that has been set, an introduction to new concepts, or even question and answer sessions.
- Some access to 'pre recorded' teaching i.e. explanation or feedback from their teacher.
- Some access to other learning resources and tasks including programmes like Seneca, Hegarty Maths, BBC Bitesize, or the special Virtual School created by the government, Oak National Academy.

One thing that was very clear from the research is that attempting to follow the same 5 x one hour lesson normal school timetable at home is neither practical, nor successful. A 'typical' one hour lesson would contain some teacher input, time with students working independently on tasks, time with students working collaboratively, teacher correction and reflection on main points and then differentiated approaches to practising key tasks and skills. This is all carefully timed and managed to fit the one hour time period. This is not feasible with students working from home.

Following the 2020 Lockdown, agreement has now been reached with National Teaching Unions to enable teachers to use both live and recorded facilities that programmes like Google Classroom can offer. Safeguarding Policies have also been updated to enable this kind of activity to happen safely. Students taking part in these sessions will be given regular reminders about the important rules that must be followed to keep everyone safe.

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In the first two weeks we are following the work setting schedule that was shared with you in the letter from Mr Herbert on Tuesday 5th January. I have included this at the bottom of the letter and we hope that this has proved effective in keeping everyone busy. There are also some Google Classroom reminders in the appendix which you may find useful. The letter also stated that staff last week were undergoing further training in how to manage live interactions and upload pre recorded teaching content. I know from very positive feedback that some staff were already beginning to work in this way with some classes at the end of last week. This will continue to be phased in slowly during this week and, from the week beginning **Monday 18th January**, we will specify the number of live interactions for each year group and subject. We have consulted with staff on what they think the right balance would be. No doubt we will continue to review this as the weeks progress and we learn more about what works best for our students.

In addition to the live interaction with their subject teachers, we are also introducing daily tutor meetings. From **Wednesday 13th January** a daily 'Google Meet' will be scheduled during the normal Tutor time, 11.30 am for Years 7, 8 and 13 and 12.00pm for Years 9, 10, 11 and 12. This session will not include a formal register, but we will have a record of who has not 'attended' and this will help Tutors to keep track of any students who might have become disengaged. It will be an opportunity for the Tutor to say hello, share any important messages and for the students to ask any questions and share feedback.

Please note that students will be notified when there is a live interaction session with their subject teachers taking place. As these become more regular from Monday 18th January, it is important that students make a note of these and attend them. These sessions will always take place in one of the usual timetabled lesson slots and they will start at the beginning of the normal lesson time. Sessions will last between 20-30 mins and might include teachers talking through key ideas and new learning with students, modelling explanations and giving feedback on work students have already completed.

We hope that as these new methods are introduced, students will benefit from the variety of approaches. We know from last year that whilst some students thrived on being able to plan their own schedules and work on subjects for extended periods of time, other students struggled with that. We also know from feedback and research that some schools who attempted to replicate the 5 x one hour school day 'live and online' found this to be both unsustainable and unhealthy. We will, therefore, ask for feedback from staff, students and parents at the end of the week beginning 25th January as we set the schedule for the following three weeks.

An inevitable consequence of working from home is that some students will find that they have too much work and some will finish their tasks quickly; that is always the way when you are dealing with many different brains and different ways of learning! As I assured one parent this week, there are no 'sanctions' for students who do not manage to finish all the work they have been set or for those that do not meet deadlines while we are working at home. We just ask that students do their very best and not cause themselves further anxiety by worrying about work completion. If they ever have a concern about a piece of work, or deadline, they should email their teacher directly and share it.

On the other hand, if students finish their Google Classroom online work and feel that they would like more, there are always lots of resources available to stretch and challenge them. Here for example are great opportunities for extension tasks and further learning:

<https://www.thenational.academy/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/live-lessons>
<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/parents>
<https://hegartymaths.com/login/learner>
<https://www.budmouth-aspirations.org/our-curriculum/seneca/>

A 'How to use Seneca' guide

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxTldrjIT_Q&feature=youtu.be

You can even use Google Classroom through the X Box and Playstation!

I hope that you have found this information helpful. I know that these are difficult and uncertain times for our students. They have already impressed us greatly with their work rate from home. I am very happy to be contacted if you have any general questions about our remote learning strategy: mcavill@budmouth-aspirations.org.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mark Cavill
Vice Principal

Appendix

Remote Learning for students - a guide to what is effective online provision

The Education Endowment Foundation (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>) an independent charity that delivers high quality teaching and learning resources and research, produced an evidence based report on effective distance and online learning approaches after the March 2020 Lockdown.

The EEF research found the following best evidence on helping students learn remotely.

Key Points:

1. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered through either pre recorded input or live streaming. Teachers might explain a new idea live or in a pre recorded video, but what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on students' prior learning or how students' understanding is subsequently assessed. Clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback is more important than how or when they are provided. Parents/Carers might like to review what their child has learnt that day during online work. Parents/Carers could also ask their child to explain to them how a process or example works and to talk to them about how they learnt what they learnt.
2. Ensuring that teachers and students are provided with support and guidance to use specific platforms is essential, particularly if new forms of technology are being implemented such as Google Classroom. Teachers and students have been trained in using Google Classroom and there are useful guides on You Tube starting here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl-tBjAM9g4>
3. Peer interaction during remote learning is also important, as a way to motivate students and keep them engaged. Across the studies reviewed, a range of strategies to support peer interaction were explored, including peer and self marking and feedback, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for live discussions of content. So we will be asking teachers to share marking criteria with students, for students to mark their own work sometimes and to share what they have learnt with other students.
4. Supporting students to work independently such as prompting students to reflect on their work or to consider the strategies they will use if they get stuck, have also been highlighted as valuable. Helping students with metacognition and self-regulation (the ways in which students know how they learn best) is also effective so Parents/Carers might like to ask students how they are learning, which strategies are they using, what did they know that they did not know before and how will they remember it?
5. Approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses. Teachers and Parents/Carers should consider which approaches are best suited to the teaching content and the age of the students. For example, games for learning were found to have a high impact on vocabulary learning in foreign languages. Likewise, using technology to support retrieval practice and self quizzing can help students retain key ideas and knowledge.

Top Tips for Parents/Carers/Helpers

The key is to support your child in the best way that they learn and self assess. Ask them what works best: is it note taking or mind mapping or creating their own questions that helps their learning? Do they know how to self regulate (look after themselves when learning gets tough) and do they know how to remember the information they have learnt?

Making the learning accessible, challenging but not overwhelming for students is best.

They won't want to sit at a computer screen for 5 hours a day in one sitting. Regular breaks should be taken with exercise. And if you can, discuss their learning with them to consolidate what they have been working on.

- If possible, ask your child to talk through with you what they have learnt today.
- Ask them which subjects they worked on.
- Ask them how did they start and how did they finish a piece of work.
- Ask them to 'model' for you a piece of work they have completed. How do they know it is a good piece of work? How can they now improve it?
- Check deadlines with them and make sure they know what they need to do next.
- Make sure that they also take regular breaks, exercise, and ask their teachers lots of questions using Google Classroom.

Some Google Classroom Reminders

Work might be set online but students are not compelled to produce their notes and answers on electronic documents. They can engage with the work in whatever format is most accessible for them.

Google apps, 'Classroom' and 'Calendar' automatically generate 'Meeting' invites. Where live interactions are planned, teachers will contact their classes through Google Classroom and/or email prior to the lesson. Students should not join the automatically generated 'Meetings' without being notified by a teacher first as the staff member is not likely to be teaching online at that time.

When 'live interactions' do take place, students should join the lesson muted and with webcams switched off.

1-1 meetings with staff cannot take place and students must only use their school emails during these lessons or to contact staff. Students must dress appropriately and must be reminded not to record, take photos or screenshots of live interactions.

Schedule of Google Classroom online work setting

The study time outlined below also takes into account 'live interactions' and pre recorded teaching. 'Live interactions' will take place when a teacher would normally teach a timetabled class.

2 Week Schedule For KS3 - Years 7 - 9		
Work to be set with 1 week deadlines on the following days		
Monday	English, Geography, Sport, Art	Expected study time over 2 weeks: English, Maths, Science – 6 hrs each Geography, History, MFL, PArts, DT/ICT 4 hrs each Art 2 hrs Sport, RS, PSCS – 2 hrs each
Tuesday		
Wednesday	Maths, History, DT/ICT, RS	
Thursday		
Friday	Science, MFL, PArts	
Monday	English, Geography, Sport, Art	
Tuesday		
Wednesday	Maths, History, DT/ICT, PSCS	
Thursday		
Friday	Science, MFL, PArts	

Schedule of Google Classroom online work setting continued:

The study time outlined below also takes into account 'live interactions' and pre recorded teaching. 'Live interactions' will take place when a teacher would normally teach a timetabled class.

2 Week Schedule For KS4 - Years 10 -11		
Work to be set with 1 week deadlines on the following days		
Monday	Maths, History, Attenborough Options, RS	Expected study time over 2 weeks: English, Maths, Science – 6 hrs each Geography/History and other option subjects 4 hrs each Core Sport - 1 hr PSCS – 1 hr
Tuesday		
Wednesday	Science, Turing & Hawking Options	
Thursday		
Friday	English, Geography, Core Sport, Shelley Options	
Monday	Maths, History, Attenborough Options, PSCS	
Tuesday		
Wednesday	Science, Turing & Hawking Options	
Thursday		
Friday	English, Geography, Core Sport, Shelley Options	

2 week schedule for Key Stage 5 - Years 12 and 13	Year 12: 8 hours of work per Option subject Year 13: 8 hours of work per Option subject
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