

11th January 2021

Dear parents and carers

Thank you so much for all the messages colleagues and ourselves have received from parents and carers over the past week regarding the high quality of work; home/school communications; and positive learning experiences offered to students. Thank you especially to those families who have followed Gavin Williamson's advice and contacted Ofsted - to praise our school's efforts!

Please be reassured that we are aware that some students and families may find it difficult to keep up with the system that we have put in place, which includes an element of live teaching. With this in mind, our approach is to be relentlessly positive! We have introduced two new reward categories on edulinkone so that students' remote work can be recognised. Additionally, we will not be issuing behaviour points for those who are struggling to keep up. Instead, we are recording on our internal systems when students are not engaging, but our response is to contact students and parents to see what support can be put in place to help children to engage in future.

We are making the exciting move to providing more live elements in lessons for a number of reasons:

- we are keen to provide a structure that reflects - a little more - what a school day usually looks like
- we believe that this will be the most effective way of maintaining high quality education and face-to-face contact, and the DfE agree that this is a preferred style of lesson delivery
- we know it is really valuable for students to be able to interact with their teachers and peers - both academically and socially
- there has also been a lot of enthusiasm from parents regarding live-lessons for our children
- by asking students to stick to the school day as much as possible, we can ensure that students maintain a manageable workload. During the previous lockdown, some students were working late into the night to keep up with the work expectations. Our aim is to prevent this from happening this time.
- finally, we now have the training and technology in place to be able to conduct live elements to lessons.

Regarding screen time: we are aware that this can be an issue. Therefore, teachers have been asked to include '*an element*' of live teaching in their lessons, rather than doing every lesson as a full live lesson. This is to ensure that students benefit from a variety of approaches and that they don't get 5 back-to-back live-lessons. Additionally, where teachers are doing a full live-lesson, they have been asked to finish their lessons a few minutes early to give students a screen break. (And a chance to grab a drink or a snack, walk around for a couple of minutes - or take a toilet break!)

Parents are asked to remind their children that the students should look for work '*available from*' rather than the '*due*' in the home learning tab of edulinkone. This will help them to complete the work for the correct lesson on the right day.

In response to logistical issues that students and families have shared with us, we have revised our remote learning policy. It now allows students to complete their remote learning in their bedrooms as long as they blur their background in Google Meet and follow all the other aspects of the policy. Also in the remote learning policy, it previously stated that students must be clearly visible. However, several families do not have devices with cameras. In these instances, students must be logged in with their school account and must speak to their teacher at the start of the lesson to confirm their identity. This is to safeguard everyone.

We understand the varying pressures that families are under at this time and we know that all students are different and that they all have their own preferred learning styles. We are responding as quickly as we can to try to put a system in place that suits the majority of stakeholders, but it is very difficult to cater for everyone's individual preferences in this circumstance. If your child is struggling, please get in touch through their progress leader (Mrs Cawley Y7, Mr Kewin and Miss Nelson Y8/9 and Mrs Turner Y10/11). As a school, we will continue to support students and their families as best as we possibly can.

As always, if you have any concerns about your child's progress or educational provision in these challenging times, please contact school. And if you are happy with the excellent remote education our school is providing, at such short notice, please continue to let school colleagues know - and feel free to let Ofsted know too!

Best wishes

Mrs G Middlemas
Headteacher

Mr A Oliver
Deputy Headteacher

