

29th January 2021

Dear Families

I hope this letter finds you keeping your heads above water in these challenging times. At this stage, if we are managing that, we are doing very well indeed.

I wanted to check in with you all to be sure you were up to speed with the latest government updates on schools and, most importantly, to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your amazing support with remote learning.

Let's start with remote learning. I know very well how difficult the current arrangements are for so many of you, in so many ways. In spite of this you are working tirelessly to get your children online and in class every day. This is reflected in the fact over 80% of our students are regularly online and in class. In addition we have over 50 students of critical workers in school, working very hard each day. The quality of the work and engagement of your children (and our teachers) has been fantastic. Students and teachers are so organised we are managing to deliver our full curriculum online.

As we are all aware though, the online curriculum does not have the same human contact as life in school would, and does not lend itself as easily to those informal chats and fun things that face to face school life allows. To try to promote more interactions and human 'virtual' contact we are making the following tweaks to what we are doing, from next week:

- a) All lessons will have some sort of checking in/informal activity where students will be encouraged to turn on cameras and engage with the teacher and their class more informally. It might be a quiz, it might be a game or simply a show and tell!
- b) Homework activities will be designed to be done off screen; as relaxation/fun tasks. We hope these might be things siblings could do together to help you frazzled parents! Equally they might be puzzles or challenges that friends could do socially over face time as a focus for a nice chat and catch up with a friend. They will NOT be compulsory.
- c) There will be a second assembly every Friday to celebrate the wonderful work students are doing and allow other forms or groups to see what each other is doing.

We hope these tweaks will prove beneficial to everyone. Please do feel free to contact us if you would like to give any feedback or you are struggling with any aspect of current school life. We are pushing hard for all students to maintain good routines and good virtual attendance to class, as this is the only normality and routine available at this time. As much as we all have days at the moment where we would happily pull the duvets over our heads and stay in bed all day; we will keep working with you to keep as much structure, learning and human contact as we can for your children. Please note though if your child is unwell or you need to take time out of classes for family issues, that is not a problem. Please send us an email or give us a ring to avoid getting a text saying your child is not in lesson.

This routine is all the more important given the announcement this week that schools will not return to any further face to face teaching until 8th March, at the earliest. Then any return would be dependent on cases and hospital admissions all reducing significantly, and the vaccine programme continuing at the same pace.

Finally, please remember we are here to support you in any way we can. If you need anything, or are struggling please get in touch. The fact we are teaching a full timetable means you will not get as many phone calls from us as you did during the last lockdown, but every child does have their link teacher. If you feel you would like more contact please just ask, we will happily help you get your child up or check in with them more frequently.

I am so proud and grateful to you all for how well you and your children are doing. But these are tough times, we are here if you need us. To reassure families in receipt of free school meals, although it has been announced the government will not be providing vouchers over half term, we will be providing them to our families.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Ruth England
Headteacher