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Headteacher: Mr M Wignall

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Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you are all well. I am writing following yesterday's announcement by the Prime Minister which had far reaching implications for schools. At present, we are waiting for further information and guidance on mass testing and also examinations, amongst other things. For year 11 students, Mr Ashdown will be sending a separate letter home about preparation for GCSE's in whatever guise they are in this summer. Our main message is that whatever happens, we are here to support.

As you are now aware, most students will be working from home until at least February half term. The exceptions are children of 'Critical Workers and Vulnerable children' who are on site each day. Please find information below on our approach to remote learning and also a help guide on how to access it. There are also sections on: our provision of laptops, SEND support and also some useful advice about how to support your child at home over the coming weeks.

Our pastoral teams are working on a number of approaches to contact and check in with all students regularly and we will communicate these with you once plans are finalised.

Home Learning

Our aim is to provide a structured school day online which, as far as possible, follows the student's normal timetable and curriculum.

Lessons will be either by 'Live Lessons' in TEAMS or 'teacher explanation' lessons – lessons which are pre-recorded or have audio embedded into them.

These pre-recorded lessons were very successful during our first lockdown and enabled teachers to provide explanations about the lessons aim, the activities, provide feedback on tasks, enable teachers to encourage student's reflection on their learning, as well as modelling processes and structures, which are all key aspects of effective learning.

These pre-recorded lessons also give students the opportunity to pause and rewind teacher's explanation and work at their own pace.

How Students Access their Work

Students access their home learning by logging on to their school email account. Their teachers will have emailed them their lessons for the day by 9am or will have emailed them an invitation to join a Live Lesson.

How to join a Live Lesson

Live Lessons will be scheduled to begin at their 'normal' lesson time and students can join a lesson in 2 ways:

1) Via Email

When a teacher sets up a live lesson students will receive an email invitation. An email with the link will also be sent before 9am in the morning with instructions. At the bottom of the email is the link for them to join the lesson.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

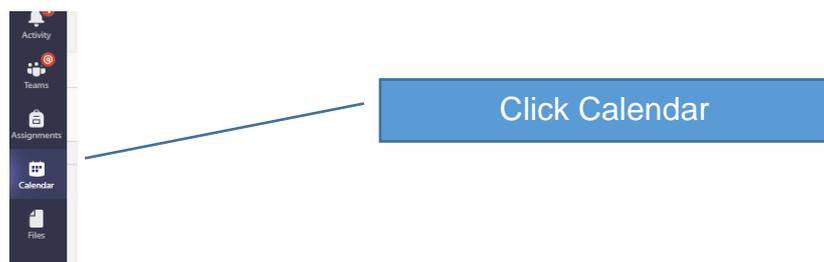
[Click here to join the meeting](#)



[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

2) Through TEAMS calendar

When students log on to TEAMS they can click on the calendar tab at the left hand side of their screen



This will take students to their calendar where they will see their timetable. They simply click on the lesson and this will then give them the option to join the meeting.

Expectations

The expectation is that students should complete the work set by their teachers and follow their normal timetable of lessons.

However, we are fully aware that there are a number of barriers, which may make this challenging for some of our students and families. This has led, during the last lockdown, to some students and families feeling overwhelmed and anxious about the volume of work being set and some students having to work long hours to complete work. In this situation, it is appropriate for families to make decisions about how much work should be completed and, students will not be sanctioned for not completing all the work set.

Students may be asked to submit work to their teachers and this will be done through TEAMS assignments, and parents/carers and students will be notified through **EduLink**.

Feedback

During this next period of lockdown students will be asked to submit work to be assessed through TEAMS. When students are asked to submit work they will be given guidance by their teachers.

Teachers will also inform you via EduLink when work will need to be submitted.

Their teachers will then provide feedback for this work through TEAMS, the frequency of this will be the same as if the students were in school.

What is TEAMS?

TEAMS is an online platform which enables teachers to share resources, set assignments, provide feedback and deliver live lessons.

Supporting your Child (Click the links)

[MS Teams Parent Guide](#) (A simple users guide for parents/carers to enable you to get started)

[Downlands School Apps Information](#) (A list of school apps used by the whole school and specific subjects)

[Digital Acceptable Use Policy](#) (Our policy has been updated to include important information about how students should conduct themselves in a 'Live Lesson')

[Good habits for home learning](#)

[Getting motivated during lockdown](#)

[Goal setting sheets](#)

Laptops

We are beginning to collate support for parents/carers regarding home learning devices. We are excited about delivering Live Lessons and have enjoyed the interaction with students who have impressed us with their application.

Moving forward we have received 32 laptops from the government to deliver to students who qualify as below:

- disadvantaged children who do not have access to a device and whose face-to-face education is disrupted
- disadvantaged children who have been advised to shield because they (or someone they live with) are clinically extremely vulnerable

The distribution and configuration of these devices is our first priority and is happening right now. We will communicate with those families with whom we are able to provide a laptop shortly.

Our next priority is providing resources for critical workers and vulnerable students attending school. We are still operating our school bubbles and in order to do so require the use of some of our laptops along with any exam or mock exam provision.

We will then be co-ordinating the release of further laptops to disadvantaged families that missed out on the government's provision of devices.

We are awaiting the arrival from Vodafone (delivery due in January) of prepaid SIMS cards to enable those families without internet access to allow their children to access the remote lessons.

Unfortunately, this will mean we will not be able to support every family that is in need of an extra laptop or device. We have ensured that all Live Lessons' are recorded and are available at a later date for students who are unable to attend them.

SEND Support

We appreciate that for students with additional needs managing the new online learning approach brings further challenges. It is important to reiterate what has been said about the length of time we are asking students to spend on a task, we do not want students stuck on tasks. Have a go and then email for assistance.

To help your child at home consider their visual experience on the computer. Changing the background colour, font and font size, looking up pictures, video clips, diagrams will all help make work more inviting and assist especially those who are not strong readers and writers.

Routines are very helpful in getting things done and having a working routine in your child's day, that is adhered to, will reduce moans, increase work output and generally make the experience more positive. Mentally it is better for the students to get up and have their work routine in the morning. They can have down time later with a feeling of accomplishment and not have tasks still looming over throughout the day. This will also help prevent them becoming 'nocturnal', as many teenagers seem prone to do.

The Learning Support Department has allocated specific teaching assistants to students with EHCPs, with whom they are making weekly contact, with support and guidance.

Students who work with Teaching Assistants in class can email them to seek explanation, clarification, further guidance etc.

If you have concerns about supporting your child with their work, because they have additional learning difficulties, do contact the Learning Support Department.

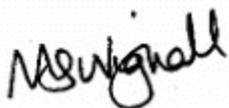
Mr Shinebourne, Deputy Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator, works with many of our students who struggle with communication, interaction and social difficulties including Asperger's and Autistic spectrum.

Ms Duncumb, English teacher but also teacher with SEND responsibilities, has considerable experience working with students who have specific literacy learning difficulties.

Mrs Cornish, our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator, manages the department and many of you will have had contact with her.

Once again, please let us know if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Mr M Wignall
Headteacher