



Information for Parents

January 2021

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Bede Safe in School

Information regarding our provision for pupils over the coming weeks

No one would be able to say with certainty whether schools will return after half-term or that lockdown is then extended locally or nationally. What can be said is that there is a shared desire to do all we can to prevent pupils, particularly our most vulnerable and disadvantaged, from falling behind. I know that the remote learning together with the provision in school for pupils who are vulnerable and children of NHS staff and other key workers together with the support we will provide over the weeks ahead will be focused on that intent.

Remote learning

Although remote learning can never be a substitute for 'face-to-face' teaching, we are committed to ensuring that it is as effective as possible in meeting the needs of all our pupils. Individual teachers and departments will use a variety of approaches to deliver each lesson according to the needs of the subject or topic as well as the class.

Mr Langley and Miss Cochrane have been asking pupils to complete a questionnaire on Firefly to assess how easy it is for our pupils to access online learning through asking about laptop availability, wifi connectivity etc. In some instances, they have contacted some parents via telephone calls if online access may prove to be difficult. This will help us to provide targeted support and assistance where necessary.

The media have, in some cases, cited a model of Zoom (or equivalent) lessons that follow a pupil's daily timetable as the ideal way for pupils to learn during lockdown. However, the context of every school varies enormously and as well as delivering online lessons, we have staff in school on a rota basis working with the vulnerable children, children of NHS staff and other key workers.. A 'one size fits all' approach like this is unlikely to benefit all pupils and we are conscious that the context in which pupils complete online learning will vary enormously and be affected by such things as: the presence of siblings at home; shared computers; internet connectivity as well as the health of family members.

However, we will be delivering a far greater proportion of lesson time using live and/or pre-recorded teacher interaction with classes using Zoom or another online platform than during the previous lockdown. We will also allocate some lessons to providing feedback to individual pupils or small groups on key aspects of their work that need to be developed or that they need assistance with. This may involve small group conversations via Zoom or its live webchat function. The aim is to maintain helpful, supportive dialogue between teachers and pupils. Inevitably, as would be the case in face-to-face teaching, there will also be time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. Pupils will also receive information detailing the content and focus of lessons over the weeks ahead that will help to give them a clear direction and aid motivation.

Like most schools, much valuable experience has been gained during the previous lockdown and providing remote learning for groups of pupils asked to self-isolate last year. Resources such as those provided by the Oak National Academy have been endorsed by the government and, where applicable, staff will make use of these together with those from other highly regarded providers such as the BBC.

We are conscious that the provision we are making for our pupils should be manageable in terms of difficulty and quantity. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teachers in situations where you have concerns with the work that has been provided.

Access to online learning

As already stated, identifying where pupils are in need of additional support with online learning, particularly in terms of access to lessons is vital. We are identifying where pupils are without a laptop or where family circumstances are such that access to a device is limited and finding means of addressing this need. Our 'Just Giving' page is one means of raising additional funds to assist in this process.

Useful resources / technology

There have been a number of national developments and ways of accessing the internet that designed to prevent disadvantaged and other vulnerable pupils from falling behind:

Data Allowances

Schools can request mobile data increases for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education
- This applies to families with access to a mobile 'phone on one of the following networks:
- Three / Smarty / Virgin Mobile / EE / Tesco Mobile / Sky Mobile

We will be identifying which pupils and families might benefit through the Daily Review system.

Smart TVs

Pupils can access Teams/ Google from smart TVs. Most smart TVs will allow keyboard and mouse input, but students need to have something other than the basic web browser installed. Some will allow you to install Chrome/Firefox. If they do, the console will act in much the same way as a PC.

PS4 and Xbox

Pupils can access Teams/ Google from games consoles but not Google Meets/live lessons. A keyboard can also be added to consoles, but not a mouse.

Monitoring & supporting our pupils

Monitoring engagement and completion of work

Monitoring the work pupils are completing online and providing intervention when necessary is a key element of maintaining continuity of learning. To help us with this process, pupils will be asked to complete a Daily Review on Firefly. This will give us an immediate indication of which pupils 'attended' which sessions online; it will help us to identify pupils who may not be able access a device during lesson time and also provide feedback to teachers on how pupils are coping with the work. We ask for your support and involvement in reviewing pupils' learning each day and engaging with them with the Daily Review process.

Role of the form tutor

All of our pupils have been assigned a form tutor. We have revised the timing of each day (although the timetable remains unchanged) to start with a form period from 9.00 – 9.20 a.m. (see timetable below). As well as engaging pupils in challenges and competitions, form tutors will follow up concerns about any concerns about pupil engagement, participation or their online learning experience. Tutors will also contact pupils who have not responded or attended sessions. Form Tutors will set pupils a daily registration task that they need to respond to as a means of ensuring that they are engaging at the start of the school day.

Learning support

Mrs Abberley has assigned members of the Learning Support staff to specified pupils to offer support with work tasks and keep in touch about general wellbeing using a variety of methods including Zoom calls and email.

Revised timetable

In light of there being no need to operate staggered starts, break, lunchtimes, and end of the day times with the vast majority of pupils engaged in remote learning, we are operating a simplified timetable that applies for all pupils regardless of year group. This timetable will also be followed by those pupils who are in school (those who are vulnerable and children of NHS and other critical workers).

Session 1 (90 minutes)		Session 2 (90 minutes)		Session 3 (90 minutes)		Session 4 (100 minutes)	
9.00-9.20	9.20-10.30	10.30-11.40	11.40-12.00	12.00-13.00	13.00 - 13.30	13.30-14.40	14.40-15.10
FT	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break	Lesson 3	Lunch	Lesson 4	Review

Staff will set work on Firefly or schedule Zoom lessons for the relevant timetable slot. Work will either be set (at the earliest) on the night before or at the start of the day, itself and have a due date no longer than the day after the lesson. This will help to ensure pupils are not overwhelmed with too many tasks being set at once. They should only then get the four tasks each day.

Pupils should use the Review time (14.40 – 15.10), and beyond, to respond to the Daily Review questions but also to catch up on work they were not able to complete during the day.

Year 11 exam arrangements

You will have probably heard the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education that teachers' estimated grades will be used to replace the GCSE exams that have been cancelled. I know that this will have provoked a very wide variety of reactions and emotions from every Year 11 pupil here and across the country.

Over the weeks ahead, our teachers will be receiving clear guidance and training on how to make the judgements that will inform how they award our pupils' grades in a way that ensures fairness and a consistent approach across the country.

What is certain for all of our Year 11 pupils is that they all need to engage fully with the online learning and work to the best of their ability at all times. Simon Lebus, Interim Chief Regulator of OFQUAL has stated *'Our message to students is this: please continue to engage as fully as you can in your education. This will put you in the best position, whatever arrangements are made for your qualifications.'* In normal circumstances, the vast majority of pupils make very significant progress between their mock exams and the final exams. Demonstrating how their knowledge and skills have continued to develop over the months ahead places them in the best position when grades are being determined.

Please be assured that our staff will continue to work hard to support Year 11 pupils over the coming months and have been contacting individual pupils on how to address areas in need of further development highlighted by the mock exams. We will, of course, update you on the arrangements that will be made nationally for awarding GCSE and BTEC grades when announcements are made by the DfE and OFQUAL.