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19/03/2020

Dear Parent

Please note: parts of this email have been redacted for publication on the website – originally emailed to parents 19.3.20

I wished to write as we move into a phase of more Distance Learning to help you and your child get the most out of this time as we strive to ensure that students continue to progress in their learning.

What is Distance Learning?

In effect, Distance Learning provides activities that students can complete independently at home or with assistance from others where possible, which are then assessed by their subject teacher who then provides feedback to students to help them move forward in their learning. The normal cycle of education is:

plan-do-mark-plan-do-mark...

In effect, the well-researched and established practice of education is to plan what is required to be learned, complete tasks to aid that learning, assess what learning has taken place, then use that to inform planning for the next stage of learning, and so on. In Distance Learning, this is still the educational practice that we are following: teachers are planning what learning is required, developing activities to aid students in that learning, assessing the learning that has taken place and providing feedback to enable students to move forward.

The way in which some of this will take place though will take a different form to that in the classroom. For example in the classroom much learning, assessment and feedback takes place dialogically through discussion, debate, questioning, and group exploration. In Distance Learning, these practices need to be adapted to meet the context in which students are learning, while still ensuring that the cycle of education continues to take place: plan-do-mark-plan-do-mark...

What are the expectations regarding Distance Learning?

During a period of Distance Learning, the structure of children's days may vary from the norm and therefore it will be for families to consider their own situations with regards to their child's engagement with Distance Learning provision. To aid this, we will not be providing specific deadlines for Distance Learning work to be submitted, and will not be putting in place any sanctions for non-completion of work. However, in order for students to receive feedback on their learning, to address any misconceptions, and to move forward, teacher feedback is a vital component.

How will my child receive feedback on their learning?

KN-KR

Parents should use Tapestry to upload the evidence of the children's work so teachers can respond and plan for next steps. Parents should comment as to whether the work is independently completed or supported.

K1

Parents should use Tapestry to upload the evidence of the children's work so the class teacher can respond and plan for next steps. Parents should comment as to whether the work is independently completed or supported.

K2

Parents can scan a copy of their child's work and send to the class teacher for feedback to be given. Parents should comment as to whether the work has been completed independently or supported.

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Juniors and Seniors

Currently, children are required to submit work for feedback by email. Work can be completed electronically and attached to an email, or can be completed by hand, photographed/scanned and attached to an email.

Thank you to those who passed on recommendations of various online communication tools. We are looking at options to ensure the continuation of education, if this closure were to continue beyond the end of the Easter holidays. Online learning platforms are certainly a potential solution – and Microsoft Teams is our preference since we already use Microsoft for our email and our intranet, and a small but growing number of teachers already use it with their classes, particularly in the older years.

In the first instance, however, we thought it prudent to share work with pupils in ‘tried and tested’ ways which we are confident can be accessed by all, without the need to ask parents (and teachers) to master new technologies in a very short space of time, hence the use of the SIS homework and class pages to disseminate tasks.

Children should submit work for feedback to their subject teacher. Each teacher’s email address is [REDACTED].

In terms of communication regarding learning, there will largely be two categories:

1. Being stuck on a piece of work and having a question for the teacher

In this situation, children should submit their question to their subject teacher by email and should expect a response within two working days, during term time. If no response is received in that time, please forward the query to [REDACTED].

2. Submitting a completed piece of work for feedback

In this situation, children should submit their work with a clear title by email to their subject teacher. Children should expect to receive feedback by email on their completed work within one working week, during term time. If no response is received in that time, please forward the query to [REDACTED].

I am sure you will understand that while families may be ill, self-isolating, caring for sick relatives or looking after their own children, the same is true for many of our teachers. In these cases a teacher may be in a situation where they are not currently working, and therefore you may not receive a response in the times specified above. In that situation, emailing [REDACTED] will ensure that we can direct your query or submitted piece of work to a different teacher.

Where can I find my child’s Distance Learning tasks?

Kindergarten

Distance Learning tasks can be found on the SIS on the class page under ‘Distance Learning’. Documents, if not in their pack, will be uploaded to the documents section of this page. KR, K1 and K2 were sent home with learning packs, which should be used when directed by the class teacher. The exercise book in the folder should be used to complete tasks.

Juniors and Seniors

Distance Learning tasks can be found on the Homework page of the SIS, click [REDACTED]. You will need to log-in using your child’s SIS account, or the generic parent account:

Username: [REDACTED]
Password: [REDACTED]

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Select your child's form group from the drop down list to filter out other classes. If you cannot find Distance Learning for a particular subject, email [REDACTED].

Please note that the parent log-in will not allow students access to their school email. Students need to log-in with their own account to be able to access their school email. If a child has forgotten their log-in please email [REDACTED].

What else can my child be doing to progress their learning?

The school recommends several additional learning activities that aid students' learning:

- **Knowledge Organisers**

Knowledge Organisers are available for each year group for each subject, for both the Autumn and Spring terms, via the Homework page of the SIS. Click [REDACTED] to access the Knowledge Organisers page. Knowledge Organisers summarise the key information for a particular topic and, used well, can help students develop better recall.

Here are examples of ways in which your child could use their Knowledge Organisers to aid their learning:

- Produce ten quiz questions for each Knowledge Organiser and have someone regularly test you, or test yourself.
- Spend ten minutes studying a Knowledge Organiser, then test yourself on how much you can write down.
- Cut up the Knowledge Organiser to focus on learning specific parts. Stick it up in the house and regularly test yourself.
- Study part of your Knowledge Organiser for two minutes, then cover up that part and see if you can fill it in.
- Produce blank versions of a Knowledge Organiser and fill in one part each day.
- Spend ten minutes studying one part of a Knowledge Organiser, then teach someone else that information.
- Use your Knowledge Organiser to help you produce flash cards or mindmaps of the key information to learn.
- Use your Knowledge Organiser to help you produce a news report on the topic.

- **Online learning sites**

The school utilises several online learning sites which pupils are able to access from home:

- Hegarty maths
- Duolingo
- Times Table Rockstars
- Super Maths World
- Seneca
- Kerboodle
- Educake
- Accelerated Reader

If your child already uses these sites at school, they should already have their own log-in. Log-in queries should be directed to [REDACTED].

- **Documentaries**

Watching a documentary can be a valuable learning tool, especially if coupled with a learning task. Tasks could include:

- Write a newspaper report about the theme of the documentary

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- Imagine you had to teach a lesson on what you learnt in the documentary. Design a lesson Powerpoint, one learning activity and a quiz.
- Produce an information poster
- Write a review of the documentary

Subject teachers will be happy to view any additional work of this kind.

- **Library books**

We have two great libraries at Gad's Hill, stocked full of excellent reading books. Children are welcome to borrow books from the school libraries in the usual way.

- **Online books**

'World Books' have made their online collection of over 3,000 books available for free at this time. Click  to access them.

- **Other online learning resources**

'Twinkl' provide a range of learning resources online and have made access to these free for one month. Parents may access these by visiting www.twinkl.co.uk/offer and entering the code UKTWINKLHELPS

Other advice

Distance Learning can be a challenging and lonely time for children and it is important to consider wellbeing as well as academic progress. It would be beneficial for your child to have regular breaks away from computer screens during the completion of Distance Learning tasks.

Exercise should still be continued and there are many YouTube videos that can be used if children are required to stay indoors. Other activities that do not involve completing work on the computer can also help to break up a child's day, such as art and craft, jigsaw puzzles, board games, card games, Lego etc. Children can write letters to relatives or friends, which could be posted or photographed and emailed. Keeping a diary may also prove an interesting task for children at this unusual time.

Routine

Children are very used to a routine during the school day and it can be unsettling for them when this is removed. It may be beneficial for your child and your family to retain some structure during what would have been a normal school-day. Producing and displaying a schedule may help to retain some semblance of normality and structure for children and may prove useful. For example:

A Daily Schedule

Before 9am	Wake up	Eat a healthy breakfast Make your bed Get dressed
9:00 - 9:30	Shake up	Go for a walk Do some yoga https://www.cosmickids.com/ or https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga
9:30 - 10:30	Learning time	Maths activities (see Homework page on SIS) Minimise electronics
10:30 - 11:30	Creative time	Lego, drawing, craft, play music, cook or bake
11:30 - 12:30	Learning time	English activities (see homework page on SIS) Minimise electronics
12:30	Lunch time	Help make your lunch and complete a chore
1:00 - 2:00	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, colouring, Sudoku books, word search, play a board game.
2:00 - 2:30	Learning time	TT Rockstars Mathletics Accelerated Reader
2:30 - 3:30	Fresh air	Bikes, scooters, walk the dog, play outside
3:30 - 4:00	Learning time	Complete an activity of your choice: Coding, Touch Typing (see homework page on SIS)
4:00 - 5:00	Your time	Free choice
5:00 - 6:00	Dinner time	Help prepare dinner and enjoy!

Online safety

Distance Learning will also involve increased use of the internet. Please also give consideration to the usual online

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safety measures that you can implement when children are using computers independently. Talk to them about the resources they are accessing and the work they are completing and please ensure the sites they visit on the internet are age-appropriate. If you have any concerns about any safeguarding issues, you can contact a School Designated Safeguarding Lead by emailing [REDACTED], or contacting Mr Savage directly at [REDACTED], or by calling the school telephone number, 01474 822366. In an emergency, in which a child may be at risk of imminent harm, please call the police directly using 999.

What should I check my child has?

It would be useful to check that your child has collected the items they need from school:

- Any PE kit or bags left in the bag racks or classrooms
- Their exercise books and textbooks
- Reading books from the library
- Their log-in for the SIS and any other websites

How can I report any concerns?

If you have any concerns about your child's learning during this time and are not able to receive a satisfactory response from your child's class teacher in the first instance, please contact [REDACTED]. Please also use this address if you have any safeguarding or other concerns that you would like to raise. We will endeavour to respond to you as soon as possible.

I hope that this letter goes some way to explaining our approach to Distance Learning and apologise for the length! We thank you for your continued cooperation at this strange time.

Kind regards



Dr Stephanie Burke
Director of Studies

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