

DEC Home Schooling Newsletter

June 2020

Well done to our students - keep up the fantastic work:

We hope everyone is still well and able to enjoy the slightly relaxed lockdown measures, whilst keeping safe. We understand that working at home is going quite well for many of our pupils, but that some days are hard. Do not worry, you're not alone. As long as our pupils are trying their best, getting in touch with teachers if they are stuck, then that is more than fine in the current climate.

In this edition we have tried to include lots of helpful tips to support pupils with their studies, but also to help you find interesting things to do when your children need a break from their work.

Do keep on sending picture of your child's work into your teachers - it really helps teachers to plan the next release of work, and it is great to see what our pupils have been up to!

Genie Scan is a free piece of software that can be downloaded onto your phone, which allows you to create PDFs from your images. It is available for both apple and android devices, and might make sending your work in a little bit easier: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.thegrizzlylabs.geniusscan.free&hl=en_US

Amazing efforts and achievement from one of our very own pupils!

You may have read in the news that Dan Harvey, one of our Year 10 pupils, has made hundreds of mask adjusters for NHS staff after hearing how PPE was causing pain to them during their long shifts.

We are so proud of Dan, his initiative, his hard work and effort to support the NHS during the Corona Outbreak. Recipients have included the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, GP surgeries and care homes, including Audley St George's Place Retirement Village in the city. A huge well done - we are so impressed.

If you would like to read more- see the article feature on the BBC website



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Coronavirus: Boy makes PPE mask adjusters with 3D printer

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-52566050>

Continuing learning at home - guidance for pupils and parents:

In light of the government updates that secondary school pupils will not return before the summer unless they have examinations next summer, we have started to plan some of the remote learning a little differently for our pupils:

- You will now find that in almost all subjects there will be recorded voice-overs to accompany lesson power-points. These work brilliantly on a smartphone, if you have trouble accessing a laptop/ computer. This will help teachers to explain new learning to you, to further support your understanding.
- Your teachers will also be doing a voice-over for the instructions, so you feel clear on what you need to do.
- Teachers will ask you to complete mini-tests and quizzes on Microsoft Forms, to help them see how you are getting on, so they can better understand what they need to plan for the next round of work.
- They will include model answers to some of the questions you have been working on, so that you can self-mark your work, and improve anything that you may have misunderstood the first time around (don't worry about this- we all learn through our mistakes!)
- If you need a break, or something different, there are some reading and numeracy activities that you have access to on the school website, as well as some PSHE challenges.

Real-life learning:

- Whilst keeping on top of work for each subject is important, we wholeheartedly believe that learning about real-life issues is of paramount importance. With this in mind, we have also now released some PSHE work for our pupils on the school website. There is no deadline/ timeframe for this- please have a look through at your convenience.
- There are some IDAHOBIT challenges for our pupils to complete, should they wish to partake, as we celebrate and recognise equality for each and every one of us, especially during June which is nationally recognised as 'Pride month.'
- If it feels too much for your child to complete additional activities - simply have a look and have a family discussion. Sometimes that works better and helps you all to feel connected, when at times we can all be busy on different things.

Coming soon...

From the 1st June we will be releasing short videos and assemblies for our pupils to watch, which will include a weekly assembly, short videos from senior members of staff and Heads of House to keep in touch with our pupils, support motivation and engagement, whilst our pupils remain at home.

There is also a video from Mrs Sullivan explaining the new work release with some reassurances, whilst also addressing some of the questions you might have- we hope you and your children find this helpful.

Remember to check the school website each week for these - we hope you enjoy them!

Home Learning FAQ's:

Like you, our teachers have never been through a time like this, therefore trying to achieve a remote learning package that is right for everyone is a very difficult challenge, which we are trying our best to tackle! We really appreciate all of the feedback we have had from pupils and parents, and hope that this section will go some way to allaying some of your concerns, and answering some of the questions submitted on your surveys:

How long should my child be spending on my schoolwork each day?

It is recommended that pupils try to spend approximately 3-4 hours per day completing your schoolwork. This will vary for all of us, though, due to our home circumstances. It is best to do the work in smaller chunks, making sure you allow time for breaks, time for exercise, leisure, reading and relaxing.

Some of the work takes a long time, should every task be completed?

Some work booklets are larger than others, this is because at school you would have more English, Maths and Science than other subjects - over 2 weeks, you would usually have 10 hours. We know you won't be spending that long on the work, so we have tried to reduce it down. It is really hard for your teachers to get this exactly right for all pupils, so the key to this is just to try your best. If you get stuck contact the faculty email address for support, but don't worry if you have some unfinished work. Everyone has different circumstances now, which your teachers understand.

There is new work on the website, but the last set isn't finished yet. What should we do?

Don't worry if this happens. Try your best to complete the last set first, as the new work is likely to build on the last work you did. However, if you're stuck on something, it is fine to leave that, and move onto the new work. Usually, new work will be released every fortnight - this isn't a strict deadline, so once again don't panic. If you can send a picture of the work you have completed into the faculty email addresses, please do. This is really helpful for your teachers to see your work and use the information it provides to inform the next work that is set.

What should I do with all the work completed at home?

Ideally use a folder to store your work, if you can manage to, divide it into each subject as neatly as possible. Once again, don't worry too much about this - we know that you may not have enough folders etc for this, so do your best to keep it in order, as we would love to see your work when we return to school.

Will my work be marked?

Your work will be checked, but it will not be marked, and you will not get individual feedback as you would when we are in school. By checking the work you send in, and also by using quizzes and mini-tests on Microsoft Forms, your teachers will be better informed on what pupils are finding hard, and what we need to focus on in the next round of work we set. When we are all back in school your teachers will find the best ways to spot any topic areas which need revision - so again, try not to worry.

Keeping a routine at home- tips for parents and our pupils:

- A routine can make things easier, makes us feel better and more able to cope with the tasks we need to complete.
- Try to get up at roughly the same time each day - plan your day, plan when you will work, when you will exercise/relax/enjoy the garden/read/learn something new or watch TV.
- Try to have your meals at roughly the same time every day.
- Your routine does not have to be rigid, but we all feel better with a bit of structure.
- Make sure you give yourself a break from screen-time/ from social media.



Try to have a quiet space at home where you can concentrate. If you do not have a desk, try a table/ breakfast bar.

Try to remove distractions as much as possible. This might mean, turning the TV off, switching your phone off/ turning off social media notifications.

You might need to explain to your family, that you need to be left alone for a while, so you can concentrate.

Some fantastic online support:

If you need a break from written work and want to try something different- feel free to try the websites below. BBC Teach and the daily bitesize lessons are particularly good, and it helps to vary the different ways you are learning whilst at home.

Whilst they are not intended to replace the learning we do at school, exploring these sites will supplement the work set by your teachers...

- **BBC Teach**- matched to the national and GCSE curriculums- live lessons, video clips, power points. Highly recommended. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach>
- **The Oaks National Academy**- government launched virtual school. You can pick resources/subjects, or follow a daily schedule. <https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom>
- **DfE Approved websites:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>
- **RE and PSHE resources** with a dyslexia font available for those who need it www.truetube.com
- Mainly primary based resources, but could be useful for younger pupils with SEND needs www.classroomsecrets.co.uk
- **Careers advice**- never too early to start thinking about your future: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers
- **Touch typing**- great for anyone, but particularly if you are eligible to use a laptop at school and in examinations www.typingclub.com
- **The British Dyslexia Association** is running free webinars providing support for pupils with Dyslexia www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/news.make-the-most-of-being-at-home-with-our-elearning
- **Futurelearn** has some excellent short online learning modules from Universities that are completely free. Great for our sixth formers <https://futurelearn.com/>
- **The Brilliant Club** has also launched free web based resources on a range of academic topics, study skills, and independent learning units: www.thebrilliantclub.org/the-brilliant-club-for-pupils/info-for-pupils

Supporting your child, and checking their understanding - reminders:

- In the last newsletter we included some advice on how to support your child, when checking their understanding. Secondary level education is demanding, especially as pupils near their GCSEs.
- Simple steps you can take to support your child are:
 - Ask them to explain what they have learnt to you, in their own words. If they use terms you are unsure of, ask them to explain them. This will really help them to consolidate their understanding.
 - If they have been revising something- hold their notes for them and ask them to talk to you about what they have learnt. If they forget/ hesitate- give them a short prompt. Talking from memory is a great way to test whether they are secure or not, in a low threat way. Also- you don't have to know all of the answers yourself- use the teacher resources to support.
 - If you all get stuck at some point- don't panic. Email the subject email address and ask for some guidance.
 - Teachers will often release model answers, so pupils can self-mark and improve their work, so don't worry if your child has completed something- but they are not sure if it is right. This may come in the next release of work.

We do understand that many parents are working from home, or even returning to work now, so if your child is finding things too hard, please do contact the subject email address. There are resources available within each subject which offer different levels of challenge, which may be more suitable, and also a folder with resources which have been adapted to support the literacy and numeracy of pupils with SEND needs.

If you need any further advice or support, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Reading:

To further support your child's reading, there is a reading folder now on the school website- which we will add to fortnightly.

- There are a range of activities in here, designed for each year group, and there are adapted Literacy resources in the SEND folder, should you need them.
- The reading is available here are a range of short extracts to make them manageable, with some comprehension questions to support reading for meaning.
- We hope you enjoy them- if you can, try to read for 20 minutes each day. If you come across a word that you've never heard of, google it!
- Additionally, we are regularly uploading editions on 'First News' which is a national news magazine aimed at young people. There are loads of interesting articles, news facts, as well as light-hearted items, which are great to read and discuss with your family.

If you like the idea of getting into a book whilst you're off school, but not sure where to start or what book to pick take a look at our reading lists on the school website <https://www.decschool.co.uk/reading/>. Reading Rockets and Book Trust also have recommendations based on age and interests <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/bookfinder/>

There are also some great recommendations here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/bp-book-awards?collection=blue-peter-book-awards> for all age groups!



For our older pupils: The Skills Toolkit

We recently sent out a text to all of our Year 11 and year 13 pupils regarding the free online courses available currently from The Skills Toolkit. The new platform gives people access to free, high-quality digital and numeracy courses to help build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects.

These are the skills which are highly valued by employers and sought after in a wide range of jobs. With more people expected to be working and studying remotely in the coming months, the platform offers a great opportunity to learn new skills to help to get ahead online and gain the knowledge we'll all need for the future. The platform also offers employees who have been furloughed an opportunity to keep up their skills development while they are at home. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-free-online-learning-platform-to-boost-workplace-skills> Courses can be found at <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/thekills-toolkit#intermediate> <https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

Thinking about careers?

The National Careers Week website has lots of useful resources <https://nationalcareersweek.com/>

VE Day celebrations: 75th Anniversary

Thank you to those of you who sent us your pictures of your lockdown VE Day celebrations! It was lovely to see pictures of your day, remembering Victory in Europe (which actually started on the evening of 7th May, 1945 when the Second World War came to an end after Nazi Germany surrendered). Although the planned celebrations were cancelled, it is lovely to see how some of our own community celebrated to remember those who fought for our freedom, and the many sacrifices that were made by generation that lived through WW II.



A slice of culture:

- We may not be able to go to the theatre, or on any of our school trips for a while, so why not have a look at the following:
 - **Beauty & The Beast live theatre performance from Chichester Festival Theatre**- stream it for free @ <https://www.cft.org.uk/beauty-and-the-beast-broadcast> There are also activities to do at home which link to the productions
 - **RSC**- a free version of the show I,Cinna, a characters from Shakespeare’s play Julius Ceasar. Available to watch at www.tinyurl.com/TWJ-Cinna
 - **Longleat Safari Park**- are offering virtual safaris during the lockdown period <https://www.longleat.co.uk/news/longleat-virtual-safari-series>

National & International Awareness Days June, 2020:

There are many, many national and international celebrations that take place each month to raise awareness of important issues. Here are just a few we thought you might be interested in finding out about, throughout the month of June.

- **Volunteers Week**- check out Little Troopers a charity that supports military families www.littletroopers.net/dandelion-poem
- **Pride month**- check out our IDAHOBIT pages and challenges on the school website- head to the PSHE folder, in the working at home section.
- **World Environment Day- 5th June, 2020.** <https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/>
- **World Ocean Day 8th June, 2020** <https://worldoceansday.org/>
Why not also watch an episode of Blue Planet 2 to find out more about the issues that affect our oceans <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/42030979/blue-planet-2-how-plastic-is-slowly-killing-our-sea-creatures-fish-and-birds>



Support for pupils with SEND:

In order to assist those who might require further support with Numeracy and Literacy, please access the SEND Folder within the working from home resources on the school website – there are a range of valuable resources that are more easily accessible.

Public Health England have produced a short booklet on Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Looking after your feelings and your body. This is especially useful for those children and young people who might be anxious about the virus. This is available on the school's website, please click on the following link to find out more - <https://bit.ly/2yZTrcb>

IDL Maths and LEXIA Intervention – please make sure that those who follow either the IDL <https://idlsgroup.com/numeracy> or Lexia <https://www.lexiapowerup.com/> programme continue to login and complete the independent tasks. For any issues please contact s.cumberpatch@decschool.co.uk for IDL Maths and g.hipwood@decschool.co.uk for Lexia.

We are sharing a fantastic feature that is available on Microsoft devices to support your child with reading and understanding Word, PowerPoint and PDF documents. Hopefully it will further support home learning. Word 2010 and upwards has built in **Text to Speech**. Add the Speech button to the Quick Access Toolbar to easily select text to read and click the speech button. Text to Speech can be used to improve reading accuracy and understanding. Improve your child's concentration by switching from reading to smaller manageable chunks of spoken text. Follow this link to instructions on how to set up Text to Speech <https://bit.ly/3bp2Bw7> Alternatively, use the following short YouTube clip to guide you through: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFznemOKQ44>"

If you are looking for advice for mental and emotional health problems that may be affecting young people, please access the following links, where there are a range of resources: <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/mental-health-advice-for-children-and-young-people/the-advice-resource-vault/advice-for-children-age-13-17> and Forward Thinking Birmingham <https://www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/resources>

Birmingham Educational Psychology Service has created an 'Emotion Coaching Guidance' resource pack for parents which provides detail about how to talk to children and young people about emotions and support them to develop their skills at regulating their emotions, which you might find helpful to support your conversations with your child, especially with the preparation of returning to school. To access a copy, please look on the Birmingham Education Support Service (BESS) website:

<http://www.birminghameducationsupportservices.co.uk/Page/16955>

Pause.

ForwardThinking
Birmingham



Need someone to talk to?
Struggling to cope with feelings?
We're here for you.

We are operating a telephone-based service while Pause in Digbeth is closed. Drop us an email on askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk in the first instance.

Or call [0207 841 4470](tel:02078414470) and we will arrange for one of our friendly staff to call you back but email is much quicker.

Who can use us?

You can use us if you have a Birmingham GP and are:

- Under 25 years old (If you are under 14 you will need to have a parent / caregiver with you when we call to give consent).
- Or if you are a parent / caregiver looking for support for their child who is under 25 years old.

How can we help?

We can offer:

- Self-help strategies, skills for managing difficult situations and feelings.
- A non-judgemental listening ear.
- Details for other organisations that might also be able to help you.
- Each call lasts around 20-30 minutes which focuses on ways forward.

Our Opening Hours:

Email or Call Us - 10am - 6pm, 7 days a week

