

15th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We write after the first, very busy but highly successful week of the whole school accessing live lessons via Microsoft Teams. I'm sure you will join me in publicly thanking all of the teachers and support staff who have worked tirelessly to make this happen. We understand the initial days of this remote learning approach may have been bumpy and we anticipated this. We hope all parents and carers feel promptly responded to when issues are raised and that everyone now has all of the necessary set up completed to enable consistent access to live lessons. Thank you to parents, carers and pupils for your patience and understanding in this initial week.

Today's letter provides some important updates. As always, please read the information carefully and discuss points with your child/ren at home so they remain up to date.

FSM Vouchers

The Government have now announced that the Edenred national voucher scheme will be back online from Monday. For the first two weeks of this term, we have supplied food parcels for pupils who are eligible for free school meals. From Monday 18th, we will be able to begin ordering the vouchers and these will arrive to parents and carers by email by Friday 22nd January. The vouchers will cover 4 weeks in total, taking us up to February half term.

Live Lessons and MS Teams

Lessons online this week have been a resounding success, with some fantastic work submitted by pupils and very high levels of attendance. As we now settle into this way of working for the coming weeks there are some key updates:

1. The private chat function will be disabled from Monday. This is to enable complete focus on the lesson and associated work, without any distractions.
2. Pupils who attempt to access a lesson via a personal email address or a parental email account will not be allowed into lessons – access will only be granted for pupils who are accessing the system via their school email address.
3. More use will be made of the lesson conversation thread to check pupils' understanding and ask ongoing questions during the lesson; ensuring pupils are maintaining maximum concentration
4. From Monday, positives, points and negatives will be added to Bromcom during lessons in-line with school policy to reward and recognise excellence in live lessons as well as promptly address anything that falls short of the DEC standard.
5. In line with the standards we uphold at DEC, we will ensure that conduct is exemplary. Any pupil who does not contribute positively, or causes concern will be spoken to by their Head of House who may also request for an individual to be removed from live lessons for a period of time – in this instance, hard copy work will be sent home for completion and submission.

Assemblies, PSHE, The Wider Curriculum and Pupil Pledge

From Monday, weekly House assemblies and PSHE lessons which tie in with our pastoral and safeguarding curriculum will be made available. These will be pre-recorded for pupils to engage with at a time that suits them – this could be later in the day when their live lessons are complete or in the mornings before lessons start.



Also from Monday we will be gradually launching a further supplement to pupil's timetabled lessons. The virtual wider curriculum offer will include an exciting range of activities pupils can engage in during lockdown which broaden their knowledge, experiences and enhance learning. From documentaries, to films, books, sporting events and wellbeing activities – there will be so much to engage in and great opportunities to achieve a range of Pupil Pledge items for each year group.

We will provide a more detailed overview as we launch the virtual wider curriculum offer from next week. Your child's form tutor will also provide further details when they make contact.

Wellbeing, Safeguarding and Mental Health

We understand and appreciate that, like all pupils and parents across the country, completing live lessons at home and the continuing COVID-19 pandemic can be tricky at times. With this in mind, weekly contact is being made by all form tutors with parents/ carers and pupils. Included in this contact will be some guidance and website links to support parents/ carers navigate and monitor pupils working online for significantly longer periods of time than would usually be the case. Now more than ever, online safety and proactivity is essential. In addition, the guidance will help pupils and parents/ carers look at ways to support wellbeing, helpful suggestions on how to stay physically and mentally healthy during lockdown and also how to seek support if needed.

Please look out for emails each week which will require a response so we can maintain our excellent pastoral care virtually alongside our live lessons and remote academic curriculum.

Parent Voice – We Want Your Feedback

Please provide us with some feedback as to how you and your child/ren have found remote learning during the first full week of live lessons. We are committed to ensuring we provide the very best provision during these challenging circumstances. Thank you in advance for taking the time to provide us with constructive feedback. Please reply by Tuesday 19th January 3pm. <https://bit.ly/39xwRWN>

Thank you for your continued support, as always.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Dunn
Head Teacher

