



15 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Since first moving to remote learning in March 2020, we have committed to constantly reviewing and adapting our provision to provide high quality learning to all students. Our current provision is serving students well in ensuring full access to the whole curriculum and providing regular feedback from class teachers.

We are now in a position where we will be further enhancing our remote learning offer with the addition of some LIVE teaching using Microsoft TEAMS for all year groups, this is intended to complement, but not replace, the existing remote learning set over Class Charts.

I wrote to you in late November outlining a great many issues, and barriers, that prevented us from making this enhancement. Since that time, many staff have worked tirelessly (including over the Christmas holidays) to remove those barriers. Of particular note, is the number of devices now distributed to our students. We are now at a point where over 90% of students can access a device. We are really grateful for the donations of second-hand machines provided to us from parents and members of the community. We have engaged with local companies to help get these machines 'wiped' and repurposed, so families can use them. We are grateful for generous financial donations from institutions such as the Rotary Club and we are working with local Councillors to get still more devices. We know we still have many families without a device, but we are continuing to find devices and we are hopeful we can get more from the Government once they release details for the next round of devices for distribution. I am really proud of the community response to our issues – it has been a real positive to come out of this national crisis. We have also resolved issues concerning internet access. Not least because of the change in mobile network service providers allowing 'free' access to educational websites. But also, we have managed to distribute a great many dongles to families in need.

We have learned many valuable lessons in the last few months regarding remote learning. We have reflected on our Post 16 remote offer, which provides 'live lessons' to almost all classes and has been in place since September 2020. We now know what works well and what still needs improvement and the lessons learned mean, we can incorporate that feedback into our offer for KS4 and then KS3. Not only this, but we have learned from other schools, the impact of live lessons on students. We have heard the stories of 'burn out' of students, and indeed teachers, expected to sit in front of a screen for 5 or 6 hours. Not only has this been proven to have had a negative impact on young peoples' physical health, but it has also been proven to impact negatively on their mental health. Therefore, we have taken on board this learning and ensured we strike the right balance between our current offer and what we will do to enhance it from next week.

To be clear, and to help manage everyone's expectations, we will not be providing 5 hours of live lessons a day. The recent publication from Ofsted (read [HERE](#)), clearly states that 'live lessons' are not the 'gold standard'.

Please be minded, teachers have been asked not to simply talk at a screen for hours. We do not teach like this in classrooms in school, we are certainly not going to start doing that at home. Teachers will interact with students and set them tasks and activities and we want students to engage and respond positively. No one learns well by simply being talked at, and simply sitting there.



The quality of provision available currently through Class Charts is strong. The levels of engagement from students still at school is very high, as it is for many students at home. They are happily getting on with their work and they are enthused and motivated. I do not want to simply remove this way of working, I want to now enhance it, which is why we will offer the following:

Key Stage Three: One LIVE lesson and tutorial per subject, as of week commencing Monday, 25 January.

Key Stage Four: Two LIVE lessons per subject as of week commencing Monday, 18 January for Year 11 and as of week commencing Monday, 25 January for Year 10, with the exception of English Literature which begins on Monday, 18 January.

Key Stage Five: Continuation of LIVE lessons for the full timetable.

This change is being implemented with full consideration for the welfare of all students and families and the difficulties some are currently facing. For this reason, these LIVE lessons will follow the existing work setting cycles (see below) and run in selected timetabled slots. This will mean students can effectively manage their time, consolidate their learning by completing the broader remote learning set for them and crucially, students are not in front of a screen for an inordinate amount of time each day. The remote learning timetable will mirror the two-week timetable that we follow in school, supporting continued learning and progress.

For students to benefit from this enhanced provision, we ask that parents and carers discuss the TEAMS Protocol [HERE](#) with students and then as of next week, please monitor students' attendance and work completion closely. **Any breach of the TEAMS Protocol will lead to the removal of a student from the online classroom.** LIVE lessons will be recorded and by allowing your child to participate in a LIVE lesson, you are giving permission to any recording of these lessons. Please see the 'Covid-19 Annex of the Safeguarding Policy' [HERE](#) for further details.

We have answered key questions about arrangements for LIVE lessons below, please read this carefully and share the information with students. Additional information on how parents and families can support young people in their learning can be found on our website [HERE](#). For specific queries, students should contact their teachers on the Class Charts messaging system and parents can contact the school via the MyEd application.

This is a new way of delivering learning for all our staff and so we ask that you please bear with us, as mistakes will be made as we get used to new technology, but as always, we are committed to learning and moving forward. We thank you for your continued support at this time.

Remote Learning Arrangements

How will parents and students know when the lessons are?

Students' lessons will take place in timetabled slots, timetables are available to view on the MyEd app, Class Charts and in students' planners. We encourage students to remain logged into Microsoft TEAMS which will calendar their lessons and provide notifications beforehand. Some tutorials may move to a different time, but a timely notification will be provided via TEAMS and Class Charts.



What subjects can we expect each week?

Key Stage 3 Cycles:

Week 1	Week 2
Maths Performance Science Geography Art IT RE	Languages Communication English History Design PE Personal Development

Key Stage 4 Cycles:

Week 1	Week 2
English Literature Geography History Science MFL	English Language Maths Science Health and Social Care Sport Product Design Construction Textiles Food Technology Art ASDAN PE PD RE/Ethics

Students will be studying the full range of subjects across the fortnight, with the rotas used to issue new remote learning and LIVE lessons.

NB: Week Commencing Monday, 18 January is week 1 of the school timetable and week 1 of the above cycles.

What support will students receive with MS TEAMS?

All students were given training in Term 1 of this academic year on accessing MS TEAMS. A video tutorial is available on our website and will be sent directly to students on Class Charts.

All login details for students can be found on a sticker in their planner, or can be requested via the MyEd app.

How will we know how a student is getting on?

Staff will continue to issue rewards and comments for students on Class Charts and phone calls home will continue for all year groups. Parents/Carers may also look at the updated Behaviour Policy on our website to understand the new ways in which students may be rewarded for their efforts and active participation in all aspects of remote learning.

I hope you can support this move and I hope you can show us patience as we learn how to do this more effectively week by week. We are investing heavily in remote learning; I do not want us to simply brush it aside once we are through the pandemic. I feel passionate that, if we do this well, this can be the next step in developing our curriculum. My hope is that we do not simply put the laptops back in the drawer at the end of this. Instead, I hope that we can use them in ever more creative and innovative ways to better prepare your child for the world of work and future education.

Yours faithfully



Matthew West
Principal

