

14 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

### Update on remote learning provision

I hope you are all well and managing in these challenging times. Last week, I emailed you to say that we were reviewing our remote learning provision to ensure we are getting it right for our students. Thank you to those of you who responded to the survey. The response rate was very good with over 300 parents/carers participating. I also consulted with students and staff. I have looked closely at the data and there are some clear trends emerging.

### Feedback

- 1) The online provision is very good and most people are happy with the progress that has been made in terms of the school's approach since the first lockdown.
- 2) Live lessons provide a platform for interaction and connectivity. There was general appreciation that form time is included in the schedule.
- 3) Some Y9 and Y10 parents/carers/students feel that they would like more live lessons.
- 4) Some Y11-13 students feel that a full timetable of live lessons is too much and does not allow them to complete work independently. There was also some worry expressed that Y11 students are in a Teams 'meeting' virtually all day and this is detrimental to their wellbeing.
- 5) There is a concern that the current model limits the opportunities of teachers to provide meaningful assessment and feedback that progresses students learning.

In addition to the feedback we looked at research from the Educational Endowment Foundation, [Ofsted](#) and CST UK on what is best practice. On the basis of this, from 18<sup>th</sup> January we are going to make some adjustments to the current provision.

### The revised model to start Monday 18 January

Students will continue to follow their school timetable, including form time. The only change will be that PSHE for Year 9 to 11 will be delivered through form time and that the PSHE lesson will be for private study/personal wellbeing/catch-up time.

The 25 hour a week allocation for those in Y9-11 will be a blend of live online lessons and, in their other lesson(s), an opportunity to do independent work set by the teacher. Teachers will be explicit with students about what they need to do and where to access work when they are working independently. We have instructed teachers to set next steps in the chat bar on Teams (a suggestion on the survey from a parent – thank you). Sixth Form students will follow a similar blended model but should also be working to their full timetable.

At least, half of the lessons will be live and scheduled for students in advance. Timetabling the live Teams lessons will provide certainty to students about the structure of the week. We are not issuing any new timetables. Students are expected to follow their school timetables. Where live interactions are scheduled these will be added to their Teams calendar. Therefore, to support your child's

learning, please use their school timetable as guidance and check their Teams calendar to see when they have a live lesson.

Years 9 to 11 students will have PE on their timetable. This will be directed by our PE staff and some can be done in the home, in the garden and, possibly, out in the community. Before students commence any PE sessions in the home, please make sure the activity can be carried out safely.

This should include:

- Creating a surface area which provides suitable space, support and comfort for the activity
- Removing any striking hazards from the area
- Removing any other hazards which may impact on the activity (pets, fragile items, etc...)
- Making sure instructions can be clearly seen and heard during the activity

PE staff will remind students at the beginning of the lessons about making sure that their home PE space is suitable and hazard free. It may also be, as a family, that you decide physical activities, such as running or walking, are an appropriate form of exercise. Some weekly activities maybe outside of the home, such as walking or running. Please decide as a family if this is appropriate and safe for your child given your circumstance.

### **Homework for Years 9 to 11**

During this period of remote learning teachers will not set formal homework. Most of the work set should be completed in the timetabled lessons. However, we recognise that students work at different paces and some feedback was that students are spending considerable amounts of their free time completing work set in lessons. Therefore, Curriculum Leaders are creating enhancement materials that will be available to students who want to deepen or extend their learning in subjects. This will be available on Teams for every department by 25<sup>th</sup> January.

### **The Rationale**

In a blended approach we expect to get the best of both worlds; the benefits of live interactions alongside the opportunity for students to complete assignments, tasks or revision work. This model will enable us to be more flexible in how we assess students remotely and give feedback. Teachers will have flexibility about how they manage the timetabled lessons that are not live and may choose to facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Set extended work for students to complete that consolidates their learning. This work can be submitted and marked.
- Differentiate the learning through the work set and support given.
- Timetable another full live lesson because this suits the teacher's curriculum and allows them to move the learning forward.
- Use the lesson(s) to gather information on how a student's learning is progressing via quizzes, tests or assignments.

We are confident that this hybrid model will better serve our students. Learning does not transfer simply from a classroom to a live lesson. Therefore, we need to construct a timetable that allows us to teach the students, interact with them online and gain an insight into how they are progressing, while giving support to students who require more/different interventions. Your child should receive more than four hours of education a day that is a blend of live lessons and independent working. They should follow their school timetable, including scheduled break and lunchtime.

The intention is that we now run with the revised model for four weeks, and potentially longer depending on when students can return to school. However, I shall contact you again within this period to seek feedback on the new arrangements.

Thank you, as always, for your support of the school.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N Seaton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and a long, sweeping underline.

Neil Seaton  
Head of School