

March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Now we are at the end of week 1 of remote learning, I am writing to inform you of some adjustments we will be making from today. Your comments and feedback have been useful in helping to shape our planning – thank you.

We do appreciate that remote learning will be challenging, especially for younger students. Student should be completing the work set to the best of their ability, but spending no more than an hour on each subject. We do not expect students to complete all the tasks on Show My Homework immediately. Please do look at when the work is due in and how long students should spend on each piece of work. On Show My Homework it will state how long the work should take students to complete, for example, some of the work may say it will take 2 hours. This does not mean for students to sit and complete the work for 2 hours straight, it is more a guidance of how long is recommended to spend on the work before it is due in.

One thing we have actioned from today is a slight shortening of lesson time for our KS3 students. It seems as though they are logging out from one session and then almost immediately logging in to the next one. We think they need to at least stretch their legs and get a breather, so teachers have been directed to plan for 50 minutes instead of the hour.

Students should follow their normal timetable day using, Show my Homework, Google Classrooms, Maths Watch, to log in and join their classes throughout the day. For lower school students there will be NO EXTRA HOMEWORK set for now. We think they will have more than enough to do during the timetabled lessons. If Key stage 3 students are finding they are struggling to keep up with the work set then please direct them to prioritise work according to the Curriculum Plans which can be found at:

Year 7 - <https://www.chalfonts.org/attachments/download.asp?file=2973&type=pdf>

Year 8 - <https://www.chalfonts.org/attachments/download.asp?file=2973&type=pdf>

How best to support children learning from home

It is also essential that parents have advice about their role. This isn't about parents replacing the teacher. It's about encouraging parents to help their children create regular routines and study habits, offering practical steps to take – and above all, communicating with parents effectively over the coming months.

The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) has published a number of relevant guidance reports – in particular, Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning – which have a lot of relevant advice on this and provides parents with tips or information about their children's learning. As the EEF say, REGULAR ROUTINES AND STUDY HABITS are a key aspect of working remotely, and while this might be hard to form, it will pay off. One of the most useful things may be to have a white-board on the fridge door charting the progress made each day of achievements.



POWERED BY



Principal: Russell Denial



Remote lessons

A reminder that not all lessons will be 'live' or totally interactive. Teachers will use their professional experience to plan appropriate learning activities and some of these may well be more passive in nature. We also feel that there is value in providing some 'space' during certain lessons for consolidation of learning and organisation of notes. So, typically, where a subject is being delivered four times a week (such as mathematics), some lessons may have some less structured time to allow for consolidation of material. This will be normal practice, just as though students were in school.

Important guidance for our Virtual Learning Curriculum (VLC)

Mr Smith has built a PowerPoint presentation for parents on Google Classroom, which should explain everything to you and avoid the need for messaging individual staff with technical questions. The link is below:

<https://www.chalfonts.org/homework/independent-learning>

Reading for pleasure

Now that you are at home, you might find yourself with some spare time to enjoy reading for pleasure. As you may have seen from the school twitter account, Audiobooks are supporting our young people at this time by offering many free downloads for children. We have also set up a remote book club, where our students can discuss what they have read with members of our teaching staff. The first few weeks will be focusing on Harry Potter.

Emotional and physical well-being

We can't emphasise enough how important it will be to look after emotional and physical health over the coming months. We gave some ideas on this, such as:

- Learning an instrument
- Improving their cooking and baking (if they have ingredients)
- Playing board games – chess is a good one for the brain!
- Taking up a new hobby - I myself, much to my neighbour's annoyance am trying to master the Saxophone.

The following PodCast might be of use to maintain high spirits in these challenging times. Mo Gawdat, who was the Chief Business Officer at Google X and also the creator of an algorithm for happiness. His ideas are all based on years of scientific research and this particular podcast is aimed at remaining calm in light of what is going on right now. He provides some good coping techniques, which may be useful to students, parents and staff. It is also an hour-long so does fill a time slot in the day.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/how-to-fail-with-elizabethday/id1407451189?i=1000469228528>

Our remote learning and experience is an area we will continue to review and would continue to welcome any further feedback that you may have on this.

Warm regards,

Joanna Adkins
Assistant Principal - Lead for KS3