



29 January 2021

Dear Year 7, 8 and 9 parents

An update on Lockdown Learning

I hope my letter finds you well and you and your child are continuing to keep safe during this lockdown period.

Thank you for all your support in helping your child engage with the remote learning. We know that it would be better all round for all students to be in school. We look forward to the day when that will be the case again – we really miss having all students in school.

You will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement this week that schools will not reopen to all students until at least Monday 8 March and that ahead of confirming the actual return date schools, parents and students will be given at least two weeks' notice.

Until such time, our live and recorded lessons and live form time every day at 12.45 pm (this is compulsory and is a safeguarding check) is how we will continue.

Also, please encourage your child to take part in *Creative Live* each day at 1.20pm. This is proving to be a great way for students across years 7, 8 and 9 to engage in some 'non-subject' activity in the middle of the day and connect 'live' with each other and staff in school.

Of course, it is really important that **all students engage in all their lessons**. We have been taking a close look at how each student is engaging in each of their subjects. You will receive a report via the *Parent App* next week relating to engagement with lockdown learning and we will then follow up with **a remote parents' evening on Monday 8 February between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm**. Please sign up for your slot by accessing our *Parents' Evening Booking System* found here: <https://lowtonchurchofengland.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

I know that learning from home is far from ideal and we can see very clearly that engagement in remote lessons is highly variable. Some students are working really hard and this is paying off in the quality of work we are seeing. Thank you for all the support you are providing in the background to help with this.

For some, I am very concerned at how little work is being completed and that these children are falling further behind. Please speak with us if this applies to you so that we can help your child engage in their remote learning to create structure and routine at this challenging time.

Please get in touch with your child's form tutor if there is any more we can do to help.

Finally, we were pleased to receive votes for our parent governor vacancy and I am delighted to inform you that Mrs Helen Tracey has been elected as Parent Governor and her 4-year term begins from 27th January 2021.

I will write again next week.

Yours faithfully

Kieran Larkin
Headteacher

CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

A collection of ‘frequently asked questions’ (FAQs) from the parent and student webinars during January.

1. Do students have at least one live lesson per week in every subject?

Yes, in Years 7 – 9, there is one live lesson in Maths, English and Science each week and one Creative Live lesson each day. In Years 10 and 11 there is at least one live lesson each day and all subjects are covered on a weekly basis. This is in addition to the recorded lessons in each subject. The timetable is on your child’s *SatchelOne* account which you can access as a parent. Form time is also ‘live’ and happens each day. It is essential that your child joins that as it ensures they interact with their friends, hear key messages relevant to their learning and year group and we can complete an important safeguarding check to ensure they are safe, happy and well.

2. Can my child do the lessons at a time that suits them?

It is best if your child follows the timetable they have been given. The lessons are posted on *SatchelOne* linked to this timetable. The live lessons are at fixed times too. During the lockdown period having structure and routine as part of each day is a good coping strategy.

If it is not possible for your child to follow this timetable at any point, you need to let your child’s form tutor know. If there is a genuine reason then we will understand. However, if we do not know and the work is not being completed at the time we expected or your child does not turn up for a live lesson this will be followed up by school with the child and you as the parent so that we can understand any concerns.

3. Does my child need to stick to 50 minutes for each lesson or can they carry on completing work afterwards?

Teachers plan each of their lessons with work that should be completed within 50 minutes. We know that some will do it quicker than that and some may need more time. We want to avoid the situation where someone is spending a lot of extra time to complete their work ‘to perfection’. We know that is not a sustainable approach for anyone. However, we know that some children will want to go the ‘extra mile’ and do a bit more. We want to make sure that there is a healthy balance of school work and family time.

For those students in Year 11 we know that this is a very important few months to demonstrate what they can do as this will count towards their teacher assessed grades in the summer. Sticking rigidly to just 50 minutes and doing no more than that is probably not realistic and nor would it ensure students achieve the best grades this summer.

4. How will you stop students from copying the work of others and ‘cheating’?

The vast majority of students submit their work as their own. However, we are aware that a very small number of students are sharing their work and it is quite obvious to spot. Where this is the case, the grade from that work will not count and we will exclude it from our records and we will contact both the student and the parents with those concerns.

5. How will my child catch up on all the work they have missed during ‘lockdown’?

We are doing all we can to carry on with the teaching of the planned curriculum during lockdown. In some cases, we have had to adapt it as it is not possible to cover practical work or access certain technology or equipment remotely. However, we know that remote learning is no replacement for being in school in lessons with a teacher. We are already looking at how we plan the curriculum in each year group for when students return and identifying the gaps in students’ learning as a result of the lockdown period.

To minimise any gaps as much as possible, we need each child to stick to their timetable and the routines of learning each day and engage in all the planned lessons so that when they do return we can catch-up on what has been missed.

6. Why should my child do if they are struggling with their work?

They should contact their subject teacher or if it is more than one subject they should speak to their form tutor.

7. How will remote lessons help a student to do their best and demonstrate what they are capable of?

We deliberately have a ‘blended approach’ of recorded lessons, live lessons and time given over to feedback. The recorded lessons allow students to work at their own pace, rewind, pause and revisit what has been taught. Live lessons are more interactive and allow for feeding back on work to the whole class or setting up future work. They are very dependent on a stable Wi-Fi connection and no Internet issues. We think this balance allows the best of both approaches. This has recently been endorsed by Ofsted in their recently published review of remote learning.