

Wednesday 13th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coronavirus Update

Perhaps it was understandable given the current uncertainties, but I did not find the Government's announcement on Sunday helpful as, in my view, it raised more questions than provide answers; for instance we do not yet know what partial reopening of schools for Year 10 and Year 12 will look like or when it is suggested to occur before the summer. It seems to me that nothing has changed, and we carry on as we have been doing since 23rd March. Our school remains partially open to vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers, but as stated previously, this provision should only be used if alternative arrangements cannot be made by those families. As you know the Government has defined key workers and they have placed their list on their website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

I am very grateful for the many positive messages that families have sent into school, but I am keen that we act upon any concerns or criticisms where possible.

At our school we all appreciate that it is not easy for students to be learning at home and it is of course not possible for us to replicate the school experience. We will not be using video lessons or virtual teaching with our students in Years 7 to 10, but some of our Year 12 students are being provided such learning. These are strange times for everyone, and I hope you understand that I must be mindful of the teachers' personal circumstances.

I will ask my colleagues to do their best to signpost our students to useful online lessons when they set the work. There is a huge range of online lessons; indeed, there are so many different sources it can be overwhelming for students. I know our students would benefit from being signposted by their teachers to an online resource each time they set the work, but only where this is appropriate and possible.

We plan to move our method of setting work to one of setting the work on a day to day basis so that it feels more manageable and natural and that students do not feel overwhelmed by it and face the challenge of organising themselves for the week. This approach will hopefully also keep the sense of connection even stronger between our students and our school. I know my colleagues are operating in different personal circumstances, but I know they will all make every effort to respond to queries from students in as timely a manner as possible.

I should like to take this opportunity to point out that the app name for Show My Home Work has changed from SMH to Satchel One. The app now has a new logo on your smart phone.

I should like to add that though we are setting work through Show My Home Work it should not be allowed to cause any of our students any anxiety as we need to keep matters in perspective in these potentially stressful times.

If your son / daughter is finding the work is raising their levels of anxiety or they are finding it difficult to manage I should be grateful if you would reassure them on my behalf. The learning as well as keeping up the habit of learning is of course important and I would hope healthy (mentally speaking), but the most important priority to us as a school is the physical and mental health of our students.

For health reasons, given the current situation, we have had to cancel our Activities Week and Year 10 Work Experience planned for this summer and a more detailed message has been sent to you on both matters. It is of course very disappointing, but absolutely necessary for this summer.

I would however like to end this letter to you with another piece of good news. One of our students in Year 7, Ben Whittaker, submitted his poem '**Taken For Granted By Everyone**' in the Bloodaxe Archive challenge and achieved a commendation. We are all proud of his achievement. He is now a published poet; please see the link below:

<https://ypn.poetrysociety.org.uk/workshop/the-re-re-re-drafting-challenge-bloodaxe-archive-challenge-3/>

As ever, I remain very grateful for your understanding and support. I hope that you and your loved ones stay safe and well.

With my very best wishes to you and your family

Philip Stack
Headteacher