

Wednesday 27th January 2021

School Update

I hope that you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well in these unprecedented times. We are always reviewing our way of working and never more so than now as we continue to endeavour to provide as best we can for our students in this lockdown.

Our live stream teaching for all lessons for Year 12 and Year 13 is proving to be very popular and effective and, as one would expect, we are setting them additional work to complete independently. I am grateful to our Year 13 students who came into school on Monday with their completed examination papers. I look forward to seeing our Year 11 students when they bring their completed examination papers into school on Thursday 4th February at their allocated time which will be the same time allocated to them for the collection day. I will ensure that an email is sent to Year 11 students early next week reminding them of their allocated time and once again ask that they comply with lockdown restrictions as they did so well previously.

For students in Year 10 and Year 11 we will continue with our live stream teaching for the vast majority of their lessons, but will supplement that provision with remote learning set work to provide them with a greater degree of flexibility and sense of ownership.

We are working on increasing the amount of live stream teaching provided to students in Years 7 to 9 to supplement their remote learning experience.

For all students participating in live stream teaching we expect that the camera is switched on and feedback is provided when requested either through unmuting the microphone, using the icons available and / or the chat function. We hope that the live stream lessons will be more engaging and interactive as a result. Different backgrounds can be set through Teams so that our students do not need to feel self-conscious about the décor (or tidiness) of the room they are using when participating in a live streamed lesson. For technical support I ask students to please contact our IT team through the email address below and copy in their mentor / tutor:

ITServices@oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk

We have also added a section to our website on the use of other gadgets that a student may possess:

<https://oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk/using-playstation-or-xbox-to-access-online-learning/>

As I have mentioned at the start of this latest letter to you we are always reviewing our provision and I can confirm that we are changing the use of our N points. Feedback from the first lockdown indicated that a small number of our families felt aggrieved that there was not an acknowledgement of work completed by their son / daughter particularly if friends of their child were not working as hard or completing the work set.

Teachers should award a P1 for all work completed with a P2 awarded for particularly good work and this approach is in accord with our philosophy of praising our students whenever we get the opportunity to do so. The use of a N1 was simply intended as a way of letting a student know that they have not completed the set work-it was intended to be feedback and nothing more-there will not be any disciplinary action taken by staff at a future point when we are all back in school.

I have reviewed the matter however and understand that the prospect of being awarded N points can be a source of anxiety for some of our students.

Teachers have been advised to **only** use a N1 if there is a particularly important piece of work that they wish to formally assess as opposed to the lack of completion of routine work that has been set to keep our students learning as well as maintaining the habit of learning. The absence of a P1 being awarded should be sufficient to alert students / their families if they are not engaging with their work, but that seems to me to be much less of a negative approach.

I am acutely aware that this is not an easy time for some of our students or their families and I have no wish to add to any level of anxiety or distress hence the change in our position and the use of N points.

I will be writing to you again in the near future to confirm the arrangements for families of students that have not yet had their online Parent Consultation Evening in this academic year.

I am grateful to my colleagues for the efforts that they continue to make to keep our students not on site engaged with their learning and feeling connected to our school whilst continuing to supervise and support our students who are on site each day.

I remain grateful to you for your understanding and support.

With my best wishes to you and your family

Yours faithfully

Philip Stack
Headteacher