

6 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly, please can I take this opportunity to express the huge disappointment that all staff at the Weald have felt following the government's announcement on Monday evening. We appreciate the burden that this places on parents, the anxiety that it causes students and the frustration for teachers who have, at their core, a wish to educate and support students, particularly at times when they will be feeling vulnerable.

As you will appreciate, we have been busy setting up plans to ensure that we can teach students as effectively as possible during this period. We learned a great deal during the Spring/Summer school closures, and our plans are in response to feedback from teachers, parents and students. However, I must stress that one of the greatest issues staff face in planning remote lessons is the huge range of ability within one class. The work rates of students range enormously when we have them in front of us in our classrooms. When working remotely this is amplified. Therefore, although we have tried to plan for all abilities the reality is that some students will complete work quickly, whilst others will struggle to keep up. You as parents should be empowered to gauge when your child is feeling overwhelmed. They will not be penalised if they cannot keep up with the work. Equally, we know that there will be students who require further 'stretch and challenge'. In addition to the extension tasks that we will be setting, there will be a range of materials made available to support remote learning (the BBC has announced that they will be broadcasting lessons from Monday, for example).

I have included some general plans for remote teaching below, followed by the specific plan for Key Stage 3 students. Should you have any questions, I would urge you to contact your child's form tutor in the first instance.

- All work to be set on Talaxy. Work will be titled with the date it is to be completed to support students eg. Weds 6th Jan How was disease treated in the Renaissance period?
- Where a teacher is able to provide some 'live' teaching the link (from Teachstream or Google classroom) will be included in Talaxy too.
- Every class will be set an extension task (that is optional)
- Regular 'learning' activities will be set
- Teachers will provide regular feedback, but this is unlikely to be every lesson

- Live teaching - when possible - will be used to instruct, provide whole-class feedback, to assess understanding and/or to support small groups
- We know that students need to see and hear a human, and to feel valued - teachers will provide as many opportunities for this as they can. However, staff will need to prioritise 'live' teaching for Years 11, 12 & 13, and for those teachers with heavy exam class teaching, this may only be possible occasionally.
- Every student will be invited to a 'live' tutor time every morning with their form tutor, and the link will be emailed to students by their tutor each morning

We know there have been issues with live teaching using Google meet in recent days. This is an external technical issue which will be resolved within the next 48 hours. If students follow the links set by their teachers, this should be avoided.

In response to our experience in the Spring/Summer we are going to reduce the number of set lessons but aim to increase the quality and hence provide greater feedback and more opportunity for learning. We also hope this will support students with SEND. This schedule will begin from Monday 11th January. I have **highlighted in red when 'live' teaching will begin** for each lesson (when possible) in order to allow students/parents to plan for this. When a teacher is able to provide 'live' teaching, the link will be provided in Talaxy:

Time guide	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Tutor time 8.45 am			Watch assembly		Watch assembly
30 mins 9.10 am	Maths	English	Science	Maths	English
30 mins 10.00 am	French	Science	Geography	History	Maths
30 mins 11.10 am	English	History	PD	German/ Spanish	Science
30 mins 12.00am	Art	Music	Drama	Technology	RS
30 mins 1.30 pm	Science	Maths	Computer Science	English	Geography
30 mins - 1 hour	Reading, Writing & Spelling Challenges				
30 mins - 1 hour	PE and/or exercise (We would recommend 30 mins to one hour of exercise per day. Use our PE lesson tasks, online routines like Joe Wicks or go for a walk, run or cycle.)				

The normal timetable has been collapsed for Years 7 & 8.

- Teachers will set a 30 minute activity for each of the slots identified on the schedule above so that it is available at the beginning of the day.
- They will try to include some work that does not require a device, or can be accessed or completed on a phone. We know most work will still be on devices or computers.
- Some subjects will still set longer tasks so work is meaningful eg. Art.
- There is **no homework** in addition to this.

Once again, we appreciate that this situation is not ideal, and we will continue to evaluate and refine practices regularly. Your support and understanding is much appreciated. I hope that you and your families remain healthy in this challenging period.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z Sorrell', written in a cursive style.

Ms Z Sorrell
Deputy Headteacher