

23rd June 2020



Dear Parent / Carer

Home Learning Provision

As you will be more than aware, on Wednesday 18th March the Education Secretary announced to the country that schools would close until further notice on Friday the 20th March, for the vast majority of students.

Preparation

We anticipated this closure in the weeks prior to the announcement and utilised the time to make contingency plans and prepare our online learning offer. Subject Leaders and their teams began utilising the Google Classrooms platform to create bespoke resources. Teachers and Support Staff were trained in how to use the platform and other platforms to provide online learning. Students were inducted in how to access and use the resources. All this was achieved in just a few short weeks so that on Monday 23rd March students could continue learning whilst at home.

During the last 10 and a half weeks of term time, we have focused on ensuring students have a routine by following their timetable where possible. The intention is that by continuing in this way they would get satisfaction from learning and take comfort from the normality of a regular working week. However, home learning cannot match the learning students achieve whilst in school. That said, we still have the objective of maximising students' academic progress and will continue to strive to achieve this via the imperfect method of learning remotely.

Maintaining Contact with Students

Year Leaders have frequently sent emails directly to students, which promote wellbeing and encourage student engagement with home learning and this will continue. All the materials created by the Year Leaders and a wealth of resources that promote positive wellbeing are available on our Coronavirus webpage. We know that working independently at home is very different to school. We just ask students to have their best go and be proud of what they achieve. Students staying safe and happy remains our priority.

As well as this we have continued to offer a provision to children of critical workers and potentially vulnerable students every day since the partial school closure. We have maintained more frequent contact with certain students. Tutors have also contacted every one of their Tutees to check on their wellbeing.

I have been delighted to see so many Year 10 students attending their face-to-face support sessions (almost 90%) and am looking forward to welcoming students from all other year groups for their review meetings in school, beginning on Monday 29th June. It is pleasing to see the majority of students in Year 7, 8, 9 and 11 have already had appointments made for them.



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Principal Mr M Snelson BSc (Hons), PGCE, MSc

Current Approach

Following feedback from parents/carers, we introduced overviews for every subject in each year after the Spring break. Further overviews were also issued following the May Half-term. The overviews enable you and your child to: discuss the learning your child is undertaking; see what is available in each subject, including the variety of tasks provided and to help students organise their learning in every subject.

We have continued to develop our offer and are now providing increased instruction from our teachers, introducing new knowledge and skills as well as recapping and securing prior knowledge and skills. This teaching is in the form of recorded videos to help students find the work more achievable yet still challenging. Following the research from the Education Endowment Foundation we are focussing on quality of instruction and our approach is similar to that of Sir John Deane's College, our partners within the Sir John Brunner Foundation. We have purchased 40 visualizers for teachers to use to further increase the quality of instruction and to provide more variety of delivery, in the recorded videos. We are also providing feedback and using a range of methods to measure student progress. Students can interact with their teachers and request help via Google Classrooms. Please do be patient when waiting for a response as increasingly teachers may also be teaching in school or facilitating the review meetings.

Providing recorded instructional videos also enables students to have more ownership of their learning, with the flexibility to learn when is best for them and enables students to revisit topics or sections they at first don't fully comprehend. The videos can be paused to allow the student to digest the information they have just been provided and rewind and watched again, if necessary. We have also received feedback that our students have enjoyed seeing **their** teachers and being taught in a manner they are familiar with.

Rationale for focussing on recorded lessons over live lessons

We have made the strategic decision to favour recorded lessons over live lessons. The primary reason for this is that we believe recorded lessons provide a better educational experience for our students for the reasons described above. There are also draw backs to live lessons. There are safeguarding considerations which would have an impact on wider teaching provision: for example, the guidance on live lessons requires two members of staff on each lesson and for students to have their camera turned off; also, the live lessons can't be recorded. Families who share technology are at a disadvantage because not all students will be able to have access to technology when a particular lesson is on. Students can also be reluctant to ask for help during a live lesson and can miss a key concept. For all of these reasons we believe that the provision of recorded lessons allows us to best support students.

How to be a good online learner

As teachers are developing a broader range of skills for teaching online, students can also develop their skills as online learners by making best use of the advantages of on-line learning such as:

- Having some control over what they learn and when.
- Taking the opportunity to pause a video lesson periodically to check understanding
- Making a note of any gaps in understanding and getting in touch with teachers to ask for some help and guidance
- Taking time to be as specific as possible about which area is proving difficult to understand
- Paying attention to the feedback given and applying it to do better at the next task
- Allocating a fair amount of time to catch up on work they have missed from subjects they have given less time to

We are planning carefully our curriculum for September to ensure that the understandable gaps in students' knowledge and skills are identified and in-lesson interventions are designed and implemented to address them. My talented teachers, led by expert Subject Leaders, will ensure that students catch-up on their missed learning and, like County High School, Leftwich students in previous years, they will maximise their academic potential, they will thrive and flourish during their time with us and eventually leave as rounded individuals ready for the next phase of their lives.

Please continue to look after yourselves and each other,

Mr Snelson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Snelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Principal