

Survey – response to parents

Thank you to all of you who responded to the survey about home learning. The response rate of 69% meant we received the views of the majority of families and has provided an extremely useful insight into how you are managing so far.

What was immediately clear from reading your replies was how different your experiences have been, due to your own work and home situations, according to the age of your sons and other children at home and the confidence and time that you feel you have to support learning from home.

What we can offer remotely will never mirror what we do in school. Without a teacher present, and with the inevitability of varying levels of support available at home, we want to ensure we are providing activities which find a balance between challenging your son but do not require high levels of input from you. As I have said in previous communications to you, our overriding concern is to ensure what we do academically and pastorally is simple, supportive and safe.

I appreciate that you may have children at other schools that have taken a different approach to delivering their remote learning. Each school has adapted and responded to this unprecedented situation in the same way that each family has. Schools were given only a limited amount to adapt to virtual teaching and learning and some schools were already using online platforms for work and others were not. It has been challenging for all schools to establish how best to continue to meet the needs of pupils and ensure staff are equipped with the technical knowledge and ability in time for the new term.

I wanted to address a number of the main issues and themes arising from the survey which I hope will add further clarity to our approach. A booklet for each year group giving more detail on what we are planning to do in the summer term is being emailed to you this week.

- **We will continue to provide a balance of paper and online activities and tasks**

93% of you said you wanted a mix of activities: to keep screen time to an acceptable level, allow flexibility due to other demands within the family and to maintain a similar approach to when the boys are in school. We are planning to do this and during the week we will be delivering hard copies of work for your sons.

- **We will not be running live streaming of lessons**

A number of responses to the survey expressed a preference for the school day to be run online in the same way it is at school with live streaming of lessons by teachers. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, primarily safety but also logistically, this is not going to be possible. Safeguarding advice advises against this method of teaching and although we will be using Microsoft Teams as a channel for class teachers and form tutors to talk with small groups of boys the focus of these meetings will be pastoral not academic.

Teachers will be recording short video clips to demonstrate how to complete tasks and are available via email should you have any questions about the work that has been set. Guidance and, where appropriate, answers for the work will be provided in advance but we appreciate some parents will find some subject areas easier to understand than others so do contact teachers for additional help should you require it.

- **The timetable is there to follow if you find it useful and are able to do so**

Although most parents said they would like a daily timetable, others were concerned that they would not be able to follow this and would need some flexibility in terms of the times they access online learning tools. You will be told which of your son's set work we consider to be most important and we expect to be completed, usually English and Maths. The rest and certainly the afternoon activities are designed to fill a day but are not compulsory by any means.

- **Our focus remains preparing boys for successful entry into senior school**

Parents of boys in Year 5 in particular are of course worried about the impact the school closure will have on preparing their sons for 11+ entry in 2021. The activities we have planned for Year 5 in English, maths, verbal and non-verbal reasoning are all designed to reinforce and develop the skills the boys have been acquiring in school. This same approach is consistent across the whole school with an emphasis on English and Maths as the work we would like to boys to complete if at all possible.

The current situation is not one which any of us have actively prepared and modelled for. Remote teaching and learning does not form any part of a teacher's training (although it may well do in future) and I and the rest of the staff appreciate all your kind and considered responses acknowledging this. We have all been working extremely hard over the holidays to be ready for the start of term next week and I am sure there will be technical and other issues to overcome but the longer the lockdown continues the more I am sure we will all adapt to this style of learning.

The circumstances are not ideal and the future is not clear in terms of when we will get back to normal. But I know you will continue to support the school as you have done so already and we will work through this situation together and I believe will be a stronger community as a result.

You will find much more detailed information about our approach to remote learning in the guides that are being sent to you. Please do continue to feedback your experiences and concerns and keep sending the wonderful pictures and videos of the boys at work and play. They really do help us all stay connected and I encourage you to follow the school on social media and engage with us and each other there too.