



Tuesday 5 January 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I hope that this letter finds you well and that we might all emerge from this very difficult period as soon as possible. Following the Prime Minister's announcement last night, I wish to set out how this will affect your children in the weeks ahead. Please read each section and apologies in advance for the volume of information. I hope it is clear and helpful, albeit later than I would have liked.

GCSE and A level examinations

You will be aware that the Department for Education has announced: *"We do not think it is possible for exams to go ahead fairly this summer. The Secretary of State for Education will be asking Ofqual to consult rapidly on an approach for alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly."*

I feel sure that affected students and families remain stunned by the announcement and that this will lead to a degree of anxiety and unease. We do not know how final grades will be decided this year but we can be certain in several regards:

1. All of the good work completed by students up to this point (including all previous tests, assessments and mocks papers) will be of great value.
2. All work completed between now and May will be of similar or perhaps greater value – particularly when students are asked to complete tests, assessments and mock papers.
3. How committed and reliable each Year 11 and Year 13 student is between now and May will greatly influence any decision teachers may have to make regarding forecasted grades. We know that the effort of a student in the spring term of year 11 and year 13 has a significant impact on their final grade.
4. A year 11 or year 13 student that switches off now, or takes their foot of the pedal, will lose an opportunity to be successful that comes around once in a lifetime.

I urge all Year 11 and Year 13 students to move on from the shock and take advantage of what we shall now offer over the next five months. It is our intention to turn a negative into a positive and if they work with us they will be making one of the wisest decisions of their lives. *My message to you directly is: dust yourself down and get ready for school, tomorrow. We have a plan in place for you!*

Furthermore, we shall make a decision on the planned Year 11 Destination Day and sixth form application process in the next few days and communicate this separately to Year 11 students, both here and in other schools. The year 11 and year 13 (online) PTCs, scheduled for this half term, will be rescheduled and information communicated in due course.

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Remote Learning Going Forward

It is important to remain positive and so whilst none of us wanted or really expected to be back to remote learning for most students, we are where we are and shall now seek to refine what we began last year.

Below is a summary of how we shall approach remote learning going forward.

Registration:

We shall be following the routines of the school day much more closely than we did in the past. We believe this will support students and families restore stricter routines and ensure the eventual return to school will be easier for all.

- **Starting on Monday 11 January** all students will be required to 'attend' two registration sessions per day with their tutor. Morning registration will take place between 8:40am and 8:55am. Afternoon registration will take place between 2:00pm and 2:15pm.
- Via Show My Homework, students will be invited to a Google Meet with their tutor who will then register that student as being present and, we assume, ready for lessons that morning and afternoon.
- These registrations may be more like very brief 'check ins' to begin with, but will later develop to look and feel much more like a daily gathering and an opportunity to share notices and maintain the social bonds that exist and we need to strengthen.
- If students do not appear for either registration session, then the student will be marked absent and this will be picked up by the attendance team who will make immediate contact with families. Persistent non-attendance will then result in students being required to return to school because their engagement and therefore progress is clearly at risk.

Synchronised Lessons:

- Starting Wednesday 6 January, all students will be expected to complete their remote learning activities during the scheduled time on their normal timetable. Teachers will be monitoring the completion of those tasks and speak to the attendance team if they are concerned by emerging or persistent non-engagement.
- Teachers are being asked to design lesson activities that can be completed in the allocated time and require students to submit evidence of completion (that is timestamped) to ensure that each student remains on track each day.

Blended Lessons:

- One of the reasons why we shall synchronise lessons is to enable more live lessons to take place. Live lessons must take place at the scheduled time and will be safely led and coordinated by teachers (using Google Meet invitations, via Show My Homework). Please [follow this link to see information and guidance](#) on how to join a secure virtual classroom.
- Teachers at CNS have been asked to look at a series of lessons and to plan the most effective blend of three types of lessons:

- **Type 1 - Live lessons.** Staff will appear on screen and aim to teach as close to a normal lesson as possible. Students will not be forced to appear on screen but may be asked to speak, or to direct the camera at their work so that the teacher can study their progress, for instance. We know students are nervous about this but we are hopeful that confidence will grow as this approach becomes more normal. Attached to this email is a code of conduct that guides students throughout their involvement with live learning. *Please see 'Code of Conduct for Live Learning – Jan 2021'.*
- **Type 2 - Pre-recorded Lessons.** These are lessons that include segments of pre-recorded material from teachers. They may include introductions, explanations, mini lectures or generic feedback on students' work. These segments tend to be combined with other tasks and activities that are completed independently.
- **Type 3 - Stand Alone Lessons.** These were the most common types of lessons when the lockdown began in March and April of last year. They are very carefully planned and contain a series of clear instructions, often with associated documents, worksheets attached, or website / video links. Students are expected to complete such lessons independently.
- At CNS we believe that teachers should exercise their professional judgment to achieve the right blend of lessons over time. All lessons will still be communicated through Show My Homework, with links to Google Meet and Google Classroom as necessary. We shall survey families in few weeks' time to see how the remote learning has been received amongst families.

Homework:

- Students in years 7 to 11 will not be set additional or separate homework tasks. They will instead be required to engage fully in the 25 lessons per week and some of these may involve a small element of task completion once the scheduled lesson time has passed. However, we wish to guard against setting too much work that leads to students feeling overwhelmed and then falling behind or becoming unwell. We aim to keep students busy but not too busy.
- In Year 11, the Get Ahead Programme (GAP) will of course commence as planned. GAP tasks will be integrated into weekly or fortnightly task set by individual teachers.
- In Years 12 and 13, students will be expected to attend all of their lessons and complete an additional six hours of homework per subject per week. A level teachers are expected to support and then challenge any non-attendance and non-engagement amongst their students. Ultimately, this may lead to students being required to attend school each day in order to avoid life chances being eroded.

Marking and Assessment:

- You can expect each student to participate in a weekly progress check. This is likely to be automated (e.g. a multiple-choice test on Show My Homework) and lead to group feedback and the identification of students who have struggled with the content in that week, or have failed to engage. This approach ensures that your children will receive light-touch feedback from all of their teachers in all subjects each week. Teachers will also be able to alert senior colleagues if they fear that a student is not engaging in their remote learning.

- In addition, all students will regularly complete significant pieces of work that will be individually assessed by each teacher in each subject. The first assessment will be undertaken, diagnostically marked and returned by Friday 22 January, the second by the final day before half term. Students may be expected to complete an examination paper and photograph / upload each page to Show My Homework, or perhaps return a typed document by email. Each teacher will decide on the best way to receive and then return students' work.

Concerns and Feedback:

- We aim to do a great job but know there can be times when our lessons fall short of that goal. Should parents or carers have any concerns about the lessons that are being set, we ask that you simply approach the member of teaching staff, by email, and seek to open a conversation.
- My colleagues will get back to you within 24 hours and seek to find a solution that ensures all children remain engaged and are making good progress throughout this lockdown. If problems persists then please approach the relevant Head of Year for advice.
- Links to staff [contact details are here](#).

Access to Show My Homework and Email Accounts

Remote learning at CNS relies on students being able to easily access both Show My Homework and their Gmail accounts. Live lessons will take place via the Google Suite and therefore we ask that parents and carers check that their children can easily access both Show My Homework and Gmail as soon as possible. We have regularly reminded families about this in the past but understand that there may be some who have yet to do this or might welcome a reminder.

Please look at the attached document entitled, "How to Access Your Gmail Account- Jan 2021". This provides a simple step-by-step guide for all families.

Provision for Vulnerable and Key Worker Children

We shall resume provision tomorrow morning (Wednesday 6 January 2021) with students remaining in their zones throughout the course of the day. Students should wear full school uniform and will be able to access the usual school buses and taxis that will run as normal.

Our provision will mirror the normal school day and therefore begin at 8:40am and finish at 3:15pm. Students will be socially distanced at all times (including during break times) and will be fully supervised and supported at all times.

Normal hot food and packed lunches will be available to order, whilst packed lunches are of course permissible.

Other Brief Notices:

- Our **reception** will be open as normal from Wednesday 6 January 2021, but strongly urge you to email relevant staff wherever possible to secure a more immediate response.
- We aim to provide families whose children are eligible for **free school meals** with a weekly supermarket voucher in the coming days. Please contact Louise Trimmer on ltrimmer@chippingnortonschool.org for more information.

- We have secured a further supply of ***laptops*** and we are in a position to distribute those to families in the coming days. Priority will be given to disadvantaged students and those attending the school as normal. Please contact Jodie Green on jgreen@chippingnortonschool.org for more information.
- We have also secured ***3 in 1 SIM cards with 30GB of data*** for families with a device who may struggle with the costs of data bundles. Please contact Lisa De Bruyn on ldebruyn@chippingnortonschool.org for more information.

That is quite enough from me for one day and so I will be back in touch with you at the end of the week. Do email me if there are any pressing questions on bdoherly@chippingnortonschool.org.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Doherty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Doherty

Headteacher