



# DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL

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RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY | HONESTY

Dear Parent/Carer

With a week and a half having passed since schools were asked to close and with teachers setting tasks for the children to complete at home we have been evaluating the feedback on this so far.

Parents have been very grateful for what we have been trying to do and generally very positive. I would like to thank parents for their support and also for bearing with us whilst we all get used to a way of life none of us was prepared for.

Some parents have shared that their children and they have felt overwhelmed by the amount of work set by teachers. In Bromcom this will show as 'homework' because that is what the system knows it as. However I would not be at all surprised if most children had been set over 30 pieces of work by now. Remember that most complete five lessons a day, 25 lessons a week and we have now had a week and a half of 'lessons'. Teachers were asked to set work according to the normal school timetable. It just goes to show how much learning happens in school if the children complete all of the work set. We have asked teachers to set less than they might in normal circumstances. The vast majority of teachers have not set actual homework on top of this, although some may have, as that is what would normally be expected.

Another issue that has been raised is that if, for whatever reason, your child does not complete some work by the deadline set, three days after the deadline has passed, the work disappears. If we extend the deadlines for longer, the list of work to complete looks unmanageable. The difference between home learning and lessons in school is that the children normally would go to a lesson unaware of what amount of work will be needed in the next lesson and the lessons after that. In the home learning environment there is a good chance they will see a day or even a whole week (up to 25 lessons) all set out in one go, which will no doubt feel overwhelming. All I can suggest is that they do the work they can in the time they have available. They should not be doing more work than they would in school.

Another issue is that teachers have also had to manage this change and deal with their own personal and family circumstances. Some may set all the work for the week for their subject at once, some might set a new piece each day in accordance with the timetable. Sometimes therefore a lot of work might appear for one subject, but it might not all need to be completed that day.

We are currently spending time evaluating all of this and asking ourselves questions about it. These include, have we got the general approach right? Should we be trying to replicate the normal school timetabled lessons? Is this sustainable if schools remain closed for months? Are we expecting too much? But what if we do not do this? How will it be for our students when they eventually return to school? Should it be different for each year group? How can we support better those with SEND? What should we do for those in Years 10 and 12 who have already begun their examined courses?

We probably have more questions than answers at the moment but I wanted to let you know that we are aware of the issues and are giving them serious thought.

We have been tracking which students have logged into Bromcom and are concerned that there are quite a few in each year group who have yet to do so. We have started contacting parents in relation to this as we as teachers are not in the position we would normally be in if a child chooses not to complete work. We are reliant on parents to have an oversight of this but recognise this could be challenging in some circumstances.

I would like to ask each of you to have a conversation with your child today, asking them what work they have completed. Ask them to show you how they log-in. Ask them to show you the work set for today and other days. Ask them to talk you through how they are structuring their time. I fear that some students will get left behind if they are not spending enough time learning during term time. I know for many parents this conversation is not needed. You have already had it, but please do still talk to your children about the work and feed back to us any concerns or thoughts about what we are setting so that we can give further consideration to how to structure everything after the Easter holidays which start at the end of this week. The best way to do this is by emailing [office@darrickwood.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:office@darrickwood.bromley.sch.uk).

It is our intention, as per the Government request, to be open for children of key workers over the Easter holidays with the exception of weekends and bank holidays. Key workers requiring this facility should email [keyworker@darrickwood.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:keyworker@darrickwood.bromley.sch.uk) before the end of this week to let us know which days to expect their children. Please send them in with packed lunches and snacks as we do not have any catering facilities available. They will not need to wear school uniform since it is the holidays. Teachers will not be setting any online work for this period but children will still be able to access and complete work should they wish to.

Students in Year 13 have been contacted by Dr Burroughs, Assistant Head Teacher (Sixth Form), with ideas for what they could be doing to link to their next steps. Hopefully most have now seen this, but please tell your child to check the email from her.

With all the extra time our students are spending online, you, like us will want to know they are keeping safe. You may find the information in the following links helpful with this:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)

Yours sincerely

Dr M J Airey

Head Teacher