



DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL

RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY | HONESTY

8th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for the feedback we have received over this week in relation to our home learning provision. We have not been able to respond to everyone personally, but it has made our week so much easier receiving so many positive comments which I have shared with staff.

There are a few things to update you on this week, set out below. We are missing the children immensely. School is not school without them, but we continue to work together to do our best for all of them during this time.

Home learning

This week, we have started to roll out Live Lessons across the School, and hopefully most of our students will have experienced one, or more, Live Lessons already this week. If your child has not, please do not worry, as staff become increasingly skilled with using Teams, the number of Live Lessons will gradually increase. It is not a realistic aim, however, for all lessons to be 'live'.

Learning needs to be as accessible as possible, to all learners, and for this reason we believe a 'blended learning' approach is best at this moment in time. We thank parents, carers, staff and students for their feedback to date. A few areas of importance have come to light this week and, in order to ensure Home Learning is as successful as possible, please can we draw your attention to the following:

1. Some students are submitting work under assignments without attaching documentation or work – they must attach work when submitting any assignments. Please check with your child that they are doing this properly
2. A home learning code of conduct, with particular focus on Live Lessons, has been sent out to all students. Please ensure your child has read this and understands their responsibilities
3. It is essential that students only join live lessons using their DWS user log in, and not using any personal accounts or work accounts of parents/carers. Teachers have been instructed not to allow admittance to anyone who does not have a DWS user ID, even if they recognise the name
4. Please encourage your child to actively engage in the lesson. If they are asked to write something in the meeting chat, they should do so. We have added a new feature for teachers call Insights. Once they start using this, they will be able to see how active students are with their learning, including in class discussion on Teams, the number resources they have used etc.

A video for parents/carers will soon be available to help you gain an insight into how Home Learning works at DWS, and what you can do to support your child to be even more successful with this.

Lateral Flow Device Testing in school

I am pleased to let you know that we have made good progress with setting up our test centre and are hopeful to be in a position to test staff and students currently attending the School site later next week. On Monday we are aiming to send every member of staff and every parent a link to complete a Consent Form. Further information will be sent with the Form but, in the meantime, I really hope the vast majority of our community consents to the testing as it is a way of keeping everyone safer and reducing the number of students and staff who have to be asked to isolate as contacts of positive COVID-19 cases. Whilst testing is currently planned only for those attending the site at the moment, it is likely that testing will form a major part in the wider re-opening of schools in the future so we hope you will give your consent when the Form is sent on Monday, ready for when your child returns to school.

Increasing data allowances on mobile phones and other support available

The government has announced a scheme to support parents whose children are having to rely on mobile networks to access home learning rather than fixed broadband. This is available for students in Years 7 to 11. The mobile networks in the scheme are:

- Three
- Smarty
- Virgin Mobile
- EE
- Tesco Mobile
- Sky Mobile
- O2

More details of individual network offers can be found [here](#). If you think this might help your child, please let us know so we can set it up for you.

The government also has a scheme that allows schools to apply for 4G routers. This will help anyone who does not have any internet access at all via a mobile network or fixed broadband. Again, please let us know if this is of interest to you.

We are also aware from our surveys that there are households where there are insufficient devices (laptops, tablets etc) and siblings are having to share. Whilst most are coping, it is not ideal and means children are not able to access the home education at its best and can cause stress for all concerned. We might not be able to help everyone, but if you really do think this is an issue for you and your family please let us know. We have a limited number of devices that we can send out, but continue to hope that the government may send more to us in time.

Please do not be embarrassed to ask about any of this. The pandemic is putting many families under enormous strain and it is ok to ask to see how we can help your children access education at home if they are struggling.

Form Time and assemblies

We are starting to reintroduce other aspects of school life, but online. Some Tutors have trialled Form Time and we hope that next week we will have some assemblies up and running. If all these are successful we will look to develop them further.

PSFA Meeting

This will be held on Monday, 11th January at 7pm in Teams. Those who attended last time will be sent an invite. If you did not attend and want to this time, please contact the School and we will send you an invite on Monday.

Year 13 Parents' Evening - Wednesday, 13th January

The appointments can now be booked online. Please see the separate email and guidance sent earlier this week.

Year 11 data

A data sheet for all Year 11 students has been sent by email this afternoon to parents.

And finally, thank you to all parents/carers for all you are doing to support your children at home with their learning. We know this is a difficult thing to balance with busy lives and everything else at the moment and very much appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely

Dr M J Airey
Head Teacher