

Covid-19 Blog Update - Tuesday 5th January 2021

Following the Prime Minister's address on Monday 4th January, the country has once again been placed into a National Lockdown, which has led to all schools being closed until at least 22 Feb 2021.

During this period of lockdown we will remain open to vulnerable children and the children of **critical workers** only. All other children and students will learn remotely until February half term. If you are a critical worker or your child is vulnerable and you have no alternative arrangements in place then please register for a place in school via the **school website**. This must be done daily for planning and health and safety.

External Exams

At the time of writing the Department for Education is indicating their intention that public vocational exams and assessments scheduled to take place in January will go ahead as planned. It is vital that students set to sit these exams in the coming weeks continue to work towards these. Support and resources will be provided by teaching staff in these subjects over the coming days via Google Classroom. Students will be contacted separately with details of the arrangements for exams due to begin on Monday 11 January 2021.

The Department for Education have conceded that in these circumstances, they 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. As soon as any information is available this will be shared with all parents, carers and students.

What is certain is that students sitting terminal exams in the summer in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 must not lose focus now. All the work that is undertaken by students in the coming weeks and months may be used by Ofqual to consider final outcomes or as part of a combined moderation process to award final grades. It is difficult, but students must stay on track. Staff will be doing all that they can to support and work with their students in these challenging times.

Remote Learning

The **Remote Learning Policy** sets out the expectations upon students, parents and school to enable the curriculum content to be covered during this period of National Lockdown.

Kingsmeadow is a Google Reference school and will use Google Classroom as the main platform to deliver resources and challenges for learning during this period of school closure. Access is via a student's normal school login through the school website; if students have difficulty with logging in, they should contact the school's IT support.

Subject staff will be providing work broadly in line with the **virtual timetable** as published on the school website. Tasks will be set in accordance with existing schemes of work, and will be designed to allow students to progress at the same pace as if they were in school, where possible. Naturally, remote learning will require students and teachers to take a different approach to working through content, but tasks will ensure the pace of content coverage is as close as possible to in-school teaching, and ensure students do not fall behind. The nature of tasks set will allow students to learn independently, without the specific support of an adult at home. Unless there is a good reason not to, tasks will be set for individual classes. The three sessions per day on the **virtual timetable** represent times when

teachers will be available for contact or delivery of learning. They are not necessarily the only times when students should be working, as the ordinary school day would be five hours of lesson time and students may need to spend longer on some pieces of work and older students should be looking to complete extra revision. The pastoral hour is an opportunity for students to make contact with their tutor or the pastoral team and can also be used to complete additional school work and the Character Learning tutor work which is shared weekly.

Academic subject areas may arrange for teachers to deliver content in a 'live' manner (either by text or audio and/or visual means). Google meet allows for resources to be shared, teachers to provide exposition, and students to ask questions in 'real-time'. Students will be provided with tutorial/seminar sessions, and will be expected to participate in them if they are asked and able to. Live timetabled sessions can be particularly helpful as they can facilitate instant responses to questions. Teachers who use the audio/video functions will follow the appropriate **code of conduct** protocols.

Free School Meals Food Parcels

If your child is entitled to FSM then you will be entitled to claim a food parcel each week. This can be requested via the **school website** on a weekly basis and will be delivered to school for collection weekly.

These food parcels are coordinated by Gateshead Local Authority and if you do not normally claim a FSM but would like to consider requesting a food parcel then please contact the **Local Authority via their website** for further details.

Our aim is to ensure that you and your families are safe and supported. Thank you for your support in these challenging times. Please remember to follow both the school's and public health guidance to keep everyone learning safely.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the school.

I would like to wish you well and I hope you and your family stay safe and well in these difficult times.