



CHELTENHAM BOURNSIDE SCHOOL

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HEADTEACHER
Mr S Jefferies BA Hons MEd

08 January 2021

Dear parents and carers,

This has been, to say the least, a very unusual week! Plans have been made, changed and made again. I thought it would be useful, therefore, to write to clarify arrangements for the next few weeks.

Learning from home

All year groups will continue to be taught remotely up until the end of this half term. From Monday 11/1/21, lessons will be delivered live at the normal timetabled time. Please note that "live" does not necessarily mean 50 minutes of unbroken input from the teacher. A lesson may, for example, involve a brief introduction from your child's normal teacher followed by a lesson from the Oak Academy (an excellent national online resource established specifically to support remote learning during the pandemic), pupils working independently on resources provided by the teacher or even working in groups using Zoom's breakout rooms feature. In nearly all cases, lessons will end with some time spent interacting with the teacher.

Students are provided with the access information for Zoom via Showbie. All pupils have a Showbie account and are accustomed to accessing this as this is the normal way resources are made available. Teachers will endeavour to provide Zoom links well in advance of the lesson. Please remember, however, that many teachers are working under difficult conditions, having to care for young children whilst delivering lessons to students. There will be rare occasions, therefore, when links and resources are only made available a few minutes before a lesson begins.

Preparing for and delivering remote live teaching is difficult and time consuming and teachers do need a break. Please note that teachers have been instructed only to respond to emails between 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. Please do not expect a response outside of these times and please also remember that most teachers are teaching throughout the day and will not be able to respond immediately to your emails; we will endeavour to respond within 24 hours. Teachers are receiving a very large amount of correspondence so I would ask you, please, to keep emails and messages as brief as possible and only contact teachers outside of the time of your child's normal lesson if absolutely necessary.

Exams

Following the Secretary of State for Education's announcement earlier this week, we now know that there will be no formal public exams in the summer and that teacher assessments will be used to decide students' grades. We have no more details on this at present; however, because grades will be decided by teacher assessment, students should assume that *all* their learning tasks, interactions with teachers, lessons and informal assessments are likely to affect their final grade. Full participation in lessons and in the work set is absolutely essential, therefore. Given the way that grades will be determined, failure to engage fully with online learning will impact upon a student's final exam grade.

Empowering lives through learning

Accessing lessons

If your child is having issues with technology and as such, can't access their online learning, then please contact their Head of House who will do all they can to solve the issue. This includes helping with access to the internet. The school has a small number of devices which can be made available if your child is having serious difficulties in accessing lessons remotely.

If you need general support with IT please call the school (01242 235555 Option 4) or email itservices@bournside.gloucs.sch.uk. The IT services team are available between 8:30 and 4:30.

Please also be aware that if a pupil does not attend a lesson, or if they do not upload work that has been requested by a teacher, this will be recorded as a Level 1 incident on ClassCharts and you will be alerted to this. The incident will not be recorded as a behaviour point on their school record. This is an alert system that allows us to work closely with you in supporting your child's education.

Provision for vulnerable children and children of key workers

- We have over 70 registered for this provision and it is working well.
- Remember if you require this provision you need to lodge your request by emailing booking@bournside.gloucs.sch.uk
- You will then be sent a form to lodge further information about your key worker status and lunch requests.

Fighting the virus

Finally, I would like to end with an appeal. However hard we try, remote learning is not as effective as children being in school; as well as missing out on face to face learning, children also miss the social interaction, the participation in sports and the arts and the sheer excitement and "buzz" of the school day. To lose all of this in an effort to bring the virus under control is a huge sacrifice. This sacrifice will come to nothing if it is not matched by similar sacrifices made elsewhere in society. It seems to me that the roads in and around Cheltenham are as busy as ever – certainly my daily commute is just as congested as it was before lockdown commenced. I would appeal to all members of our community, therefore, to strictly heed the Prime Minister's advice to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

I hope you enjoy a restful – if quieter than expected – weekend. My colleagues at Bournside School look forward to continuing to work with you and our students in the weeks ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Jefferies
Headteacher