



Distance Learning Information and Guide for Parents and Guardians March 2020

What is Distance Learning?

Distance Learning is how we ensure that learning continues during the school closure. We are aiming to provide an effective education in challenging circumstances. We hope that this guide helps you to be able to support your sons and daughters, while they are engaging with this new and different way of learning.

While distance learning cannot replicate all aspects of regular sessions in School, we have carefully considered how we can engage our pupils in learning experiences that are enjoyable and are as authentic as possible. We will, therefore, aim to provide a mixture of online sessions, assignments, reading and live communication.

We understand that this transition might be challenging for families. As Parents and Guardians, you will want to know how you can support your children. Routines, structures and monitoring, alongside activity and a focus on wellbeing are all essential. Some pupils will find distance learning challenging; others will thrive with this way of instruction.

Physical space for your child's study

- Please establish a space in your home where your child can learn most of the time;
- A family/public space might be better than a child's bedroom so that you can monitor progress and activities;
- This place should be quiet at certain times;
- Strong wireless internet signal is essential; if possible, a printer and paper are helpful.

Routines and expectations

- From the first day of distance learning, please establish agreed routines and expectations with your child;
- We will issue an adapted timetable; please check the time difference between where you are and where teachers are; however, all lessons will be recorded, and can be accessed at any time via Microsoft Teams.
- Pupils must be appropriately dressed; casual clothing is fine, but pyjamas are not – this is about a mindset for academic work!
- Pupils should move regularly and use times during the day for exercise. Online fitness sessions in front of the TV or laptop might be useful on days of bad weather, or indeed a family cycle ride, run, walk or games in the garden as the weather improves. Fresh air is important.
- Keep to our school regulations for access to mobile phones by age group, as outlined in our ICT and Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy. Ask your child to hand in their phone during the day and limit access to single screen time to the absolute minimum during distance learning hours.
- For older pupils it might be helpful to block certain websites while they are working independently or are revising for exams. Apps such as <https://selfcontrolapp.com/> or <https://www.forestapp.cc/> and websites such as <https://francescocirillo.com/pages/pomodoro-technique> can help with self-control and motivation. A document containing further information on this, is available to download from the web page.
- Keep to your child's usual term time bedtime routines.

Communication with Oakham Staff

- Teachers will communicate via school email; please encourage your child to check their emails several times a day.
- Teaching will be facilitated via Microsoft Teams, which can be accessed via the app on laptops and computers, and on mobile phones. All pupils will have had training to understand how to use Teams, but please familiarise yourselves with the basics and help your child to access Teams on their home device.
- Begin each day with a brief check-in with your child: What is today's timetable, which teachers will be available via Teams and when?
- What resources do they need? Paper, pens, revision cards...? A printer and paper?
- How will they spend their time when they are not working?
- At the end of the day, ask your child if there is anything that they are struggling with and if they need help. Check whether any issues have arisen which need to be followed up via the Tutor or HM.
- Take an active role in supporting your child. Depending on their age, they might not feel confident to ask for help from teachers but would be happy to ask you, or you might encourage and support your child to ask their teacher for clarification.
- It is important that your child completes their assignments themselves; please don't be tempted to over assist them, even if they are struggling, but make the teacher aware of the issues.
- Please remember that teachers could be answering many queries, so do allow them to be brief in their replies.

Quiet time, physical activity and social interaction

- There might be moments when siblings and parents are working online. This needs careful management and you might need to rotate when each child might have some quiet time. Headphones will help!
- It is vitally important to your child's wellbeing, health and learning that they have opportunities to move and exercise. Our PE department will issue some ideas to encourage this at home.
- Helping around the house is also a great way to have a break – establish a plan of chores!
- Help your child to maintain contact with their friends. However, please monitor the use of Social Media apps. Please remind your children to be polite, respectful and appropriate in their communication and to represent the School's and your family's values in their interactions with others. A written tone can sometimes offend or cause harm to others. Please also read our ICT and Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy with regard to appropriate conduct during teaching sessions.

Be mindful of your child's anxieties or worries

- Some children may worry about the broader implications of Covid-19 on their families and friends, and the uncertain situation around examinations and university admissions. Please do take those worries seriously and help your child through this challenging time.
- Regular routine will help to provide a framework and maintain a level of normality.

Contacts for questions about:

A class, learning activity or assignment, resource, or technology-related questions:	The set teacher or Head of Department
An academic concern, personal or social concerns:	The tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress
Issues related to distance learning:	The Deputy Head (Academic) or Head of Lower/Middle/Upper School