

23 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Remote learning update

Firstly, a big thank you to parents, children and staff who had to show resilience this morning in the face of a nationwide Firefly outage! Firefly are contacting their schools with regular updates and have made significant server upgrades throughout the day (and will continue to do so overnight from 2000-0600) so we hope we are now back on track with their provision. Firefly provide [status updates](#) here if you ever want to double check if an issue is at their end or yours. We are fortunate to be using two systems, Microsoft Teams and Firefly which means we can rely on one if the other has difficulties. I think we all knew that the infrastructural demands of our plan would come under considerable strain and let us hope that our new normal finds its technical rhythm and consistency as soon as possible.

Despite this morning's challenges, we are delighted at some of the best practice we have seen today. In the Senior School, we had our first [virtual assembly](#) hosted by Mr Holmes on the theme of scholarship. Do take a look on the website and encourage your children to watch if they missed it this morning. In the Junior School pupils experienced their first interactive teaching sessions, combining Firefly and Microsoft Teams. Miss Whitwood also read a story (found in the Story Time folder) to all pupils from Years 1-6. A Nursery story is to follow this week!

Children of critical workers

Thank you to all of those who replied to our critical worker survey and took the time to read the government guidance on this issue. As confirmed by the government, this is a limited provision only for those critical workers who cannot keep their child at home safely in another way. Unfortunately, a very small minority of parents have requested provision who do not fit into the overriding category that schools should only provide supervision for 'children **whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response** and cannot be safely cared for at home.' If you have requested provision and do not fall into this overriding category then we regret we will not be able to provide supervision for your child. As I am sure you can appreciate, it is vital to keep numbers as low as possible to protect both staff and children from the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Senior School critical workers have already been asked to speak with Mr Hewlett at drop off tomorrow morning to confirm their status and we ask that Junior School critical workers do the same with Miss Whitwood at drop off. Please do not send in children if your household is self-isolating.

The small number of children in this category will be kept to restricted areas of the school, asked to wash hands frequently and we will be enforcing 2 metre social distancing between them while they are at school. If your child requires any medication whilst at school such as an EpiPen or asthma inhaler they should bring this with them. Junior School children should arrive at school at 0800 at the East Gate (the same gate they would normally use at the start of the day). Senior School children should arrive at College Office at 0800 promptly.

Children in the Senior School will be asked to bring in their own device in order to access the remote learning programme. Children in the Junior School will be using the same computer each day and will be one computer away from the next child. Please be aware that staff supervising children from Nursery-Year 2 will endeavour as much as possible to enable pupils to access the teaching and learning resources available online, but this may not always be possible due to the level of support needed for these children. It will therefore not replicate the provision offered to children at home.

Vulnerable children

If you have not yet had contact from the Inclusion and Enrichment team/your child's pastoral team and wish to take up a school place as your child is classed as vulnerable according to the government definition [here](#) then please contact me directly to discuss our provision.

Tinies Nursery

The Tinies nursery on our Jubilee site does still have a few critical worker spaces available as very few of their existing parents fall into this category. If you are a St Dunstan's critical worker with a pre-school aged child and have not been offered provision by your child's current childcare facility then do feel free to contact them on 020 7384 0322.

Lockers

A small number of parents have asked to access materials from their child's locker. If this is required, please email colloff@sdmil.org.uk in advance and your child's locker will be opened by House Staff and items will be brought to College Office. This service will be available until the end of the day on Wednesday as we are now shutting off most of the areas of the College following deep cleaning.

Social gatherings outside of school

As per the [government guidance on social distancing](#), we would ask that all parents remind their children that social distancing measures apply even when College is closed. We have heard that some children in the Senior School are still planning to see each other socially after school or at the weekend. Please do encourage your children to socialise virtually as much as is practicable to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and keep all members of our community safe.

Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement

We have reviewed the survey results for our Acceptable Use Agreement; a huge thanks to all the parents who have filled this in for us. We have contacted parents individually today who are yet to respond so that your children do not have to miss out on the interactive lessons. As a reminder, the links are below.

Acceptable Use Agreement for Junior School children:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3ZSHXMJ>

Acceptable Use Agreement for Senior School children:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3JFPJHC>

The functioning of College buildings

This week we will begin introducing a number of measures across our buildings in order to safeguard our community, to the best of our ability:

1. Only specific areas of the site will be open, and only for children of key workers and the key staff required to oversee the provision. All other areas will be deep cleaned and shut down.
2. No other pupil will be allowed access to the school site for any reason by 1600 on Wednesday and they must only enter the College site under the express permission of a member of employed staff.
3. All recreational services are now closed.

Public Examinations

There is no further information to share since our update on Friday. The Senior School Leadership Team meets virtually on Tuesday and will discuss this important matter further. We hope to have a clearer steer to you before the Easter holiday. In the meantime, please can I remind you of the key points that should be in the mind of all those families with Year 11 and Year 13 students:

1. That there is an absolute necessity to remain focused on revision and consolidation of their courses, in partnership with teachers, and that this will remain the case across next term, because you may well be required to generate more assessment data for the College to use, or even to prepare for real examinations later in the year, should that be preferable.
2. That the College will now actively consider how we might organise and administer robust remote assessments for students early next term, were we to consider that data set to be both eligible and of potential benefit to candidates.
3. That any student still undertaking coursework or any other non-examined assessment should now view its completion to the highest possible standard as a priority. That data is likely to matter significantly.

With best wishes



Jade McLellan
Deputy Head Pastoral