



30th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Weekly Update: 30th March 2020

As we begin the second week of national school closures, I am sure that many of us are still coming to terms with the upheaval. So much of what we have taken for granted has temporarily gone on hold. This can be just as overwhelming for adults as our children. Thank you to those of you have written with very kind messages of thanks and support, particularly for our provision for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. We have been very grateful for the calm and generous response of all Sydenham parents and carers.

As we unite to support our students and keep learning happening, never before has the notion of the home-school partnership felt more important. Many of our staff are juggling working from home and their own young families and have spoken of how hard this is. I am sure that many of you are finding it similarly difficult. We are very appreciative of everyone's efforts to manage amongst this disruption and ensure that our students can continue learning whilst at home.

In this weekly update we wanted to give you information about the following:

1. Tips for learning at home
2. Student wellbeing and e-safety
3. Students emailing their teachers
4. Plans for the Easter holiday

1. Tips for learning at home:

We've learnt a lot over the past week about what does and doesn't work well when learning remotely. Here are some top tips from Ms Pooley to help with learning this week:

- a. The page with the key details for home learning can be found at this [link](#).
- b. A **routine** is important. This needs to be one that works for your family. Whilst some students are finding it useful to follow their school timetable, others have said this is impossible when trying to share access to IT at home. Your child doesn't need to stick rigidly to the times of the school timetable if it doesn't work for your family.
- c. Try using **Google Chrome** as the internet browser, it often makes the systems that we have work more efficiently.
- d. When using **Teams** on a phone or iPad you are not able to upload work to a folder. If your child is using a phone or iPad to access work they can email their teacher the work instead.
- e. We have updated our SEND Booklet to help you with strategies to support learning at home. If your child is on our **special educational needs** register, please see this [link](#) for additional details.

2. Student wellbeing and e-safety



Staying fit whilst at home for such a long period of time is a real challenge. We know, however, that exercise is of vital importance to mental health and wellbeing. Each day last week, the children of key workers who were in school participated in the online Joe Wicks '[PE With Joe](#)' workouts. Many of our staff have also completed it with their families at home and have highly recommended it.

A consequence of home learning is that our children are spending longer in front of an electronic device than normal. Social media is proving to be an invaluable way of connecting with others in these isolated times. However, this **increased screen time**, also has its implications for student wellbeing.

Kidscape have some key principles for **e-safety** that you might find it helpful to discuss with your child:

- a. Will I still feel good about what I have posted later on?
- b. Why am I posting?
- c. Would I say this to someone in person?
- d. Can this be interpreted differently by someone who sees this?
- e. Am I being kind?
- f. Is it really private and do I have permission to post it?
- g. Would I like me if read what I've posted?
- h. Is it legal?

We have reproduced these principles on the [student information page](#) of our website, with further prompts for discussion. If you have a concern about anything that you have seen posted by your child or another Sydenham School student, please contact your child's YLC.

If you are concerned about your child's mental health or wellbeing, please follow this [link](#) to our website which gives access to further useful links. If you have a safeguarding concern about your child or any other Sydenham student, please contact Mrs Quartey, our Designated Safeguarding Lead. She can be reached during school hours on 07908 277 599 or e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

3. Students emailing their teachers:

We have been extremely impressed with the proactivity of our students in contacting teachers about their learning. Our staff are working hard to respond to messages as soon as they can; please bear in mind that this might not be on the same day.

Email etiquette is usually a skill that we refine in our adult lives, rather than in our teenage years. To help bridge this gap, we wrote to students last Thursday with the following guidance for email etiquette when emailing school staff:

- a. Address the email 'Dear Ms/Mr etc'
- b. Thank the member of staff for their help. Remember teachers are working from home and juggling lots of difficult things in their own lives at the moment. You could try phrases like 'Thank you for.....' or 'I really appreciate....'
- c. Give plenty of time for your teacher to respond. They may not be able to respond immediately or even on the same day
- d. Sign off with 'Kind regards' or 'Many thanks.'



4. Plans for the Easter holiday

Our teachers will set homework to be completed during the Easter break, with clear instructions about how this can be submitted online. They will not, however, be setting online lessons and will not be available to answer questions via email about the home learning during the holiday.

In these exceptional times, we thought it would be helpful to keep the channel of communication open during the Easter holiday. If you need to contact us at all with an urgent question during the Easter holiday, please email updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

If you are a key worker or if your family has a social worker allocated to you and you have a question about our provision during the Easter holiday, please contact Ms Gostling directly at d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

Finally, please accept our ongoing best wishes for your family and friends, both those who are close at hand and those further afield. We continue to hold you all in our thoughts. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you think that we can be of support.

Yours faithfully

Gloria Lowe

Headteacher