

Felsted School: Update for Parents - 24 March 2020

We have been hugely impressed by the way that children of all ages have engaged with remote learning. Thank you also to all the parents who have supported their children so well, and helped them to get off to the best possible start.

We are looking at improvements that we can make to the way in which the teaching is delivered, and adjusting the programme to suit each of the different year groups. Information about this will come out in good time for the start of the Summer Term, assuming that we are still working remotely (as seems most likely, after last night's statement from 10 Downing Street).

There are a few children who have not been keeping up with the work, or not engaged with the remote learning yet. We will be in contact individually, where appropriate, but it will be very important that they make use of the Easter break in order to stay up to speed with what is being delivered.

Term ends on Friday at 12noon. **Remote Learning will finish at 4.00 pm on Thursday for the Prep School and at the end of period 3 on Friday for the Senior School.** The Prep School will run a Virtual Chapel / Final Assembly as per the calendar on Friday morning. Remote lessons will then restart on Tuesday 21st April (if we are not open properly). Nevertheless, during the break, children are welcome to contact teachers with any questions, and Tutors will continue to touch base to support the wellbeing of all the children during a difficult time.

I would suggest that some kind of routine will be helpful over these weeks, given the likelihood of 'lockdown', even if it is rather more relaxed. Something that includes exercise and reading, but also time for family, music and helping around the house, or whatever is most appropriate for you.

Thank you again for the many positive notes and comments that we have received, and for the way in which people have engaged with this new form of learning.

Online safety guidance for parents

Felsted pupils are studying and learning through the Google platform and the school has put in place policies and procedures that are designed to make this work as well, and as safely, as possible. However, we must be aware that the pupils' increased screen and leisure time, at times unsupervised, may bring its own safeguarding issues.

Here are a few tips to help you keep track of what your children are doing online.

- First, have a conversation with them and tell them that they can come to you with anything that has upset or embarrassed them.
- Second, look at the apps and browsing history of their devices. Ask them what sites they have visited. Who have they spoken with? If they are reluctant to tell you, trust your instincts.
- Be honest and direct with them. Emphasise it's for their safety and their benefit that you're taking an interest.
- Remind them that their online conduct is governed at all times by the Felsted School Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Useful info can be found at <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting> and if your children have any safeguarding issues, please do get in touch with Nicola O'Brien, Safeguarding Lead (nfsob@felsted.org) for advice and support.

Awarding of grades for GCSE, iGCSE, A Level and IB

The Government and OFQUAL (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) have yet to fully confirm how they intend to calculate final grades for students who were due to take GCSE, iGCSE and A Level exams. We are also waiting for a further statement from the IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization) to confirm how they will be awarding marks for the IB Diploma this summer.

We are continuing to track the guidance closely, and are ready to do whatever is required to support the students achieve the grades that they deserve. It is not impossible that we will be asked to set some kind of online assessment in early May, to justify any predictions, so please do not throw away notes or books. It is quite likely that any marks for coursework will have an impact on the overall grade.

It is important to recognise that this could be a challenging process, and we will have to follow the guidance that we are given. Please do not contact individual teachers with promises of what work would have been done in the remaining weeks! Teachers are very busy running their remote learning at this stage so won't be in a position to be able to reply to this.

Update on grades and reports (U6, Year 11 and Prep)

Because of the unusual circumstances, we have been reviewing our communication to parents over grades and reports, and we will confirm what we are going to do in the next communication to be sent out on Friday.

Prep School reports for the relevant year groups will go out as planned on Friday.

Financial matters

Clearly this is a time of great financial uncertainty for many families, and we recognise the significant challenge that this will bring. We are working very hard to save costs here, including making full use of government schemes, so that we can be mindful of this pressure, as well as the remote nature of education, in calculating what is appropriate and fair to charge for the summer term (assuming that it is delivered in the main by remote learning).

We are also looking at longer term plans, and will be working extremely hard to minimise increases for next year. For any family for whom the current situation is making things particularly difficult, we will want to work with you for the best solution. We hope to be in a position to update you towards the end of next week.

All best wishes,

Chris Townsend
Headmaster, Felsted School

Simon James
Headmaster, Felsted Prep School