



6th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Weekly Update: 6th April 2020

We are at the start of the third week of national school closures. I am sure that whilst there may be an increasing sense of routine, most of us are still grappling with coming to terms with this 'new reality'. I imagine that you are also valuing so many things that may have been taken for granted in the past such as being able to visit family and friends at will and shopping without queuing two metres apart outside shops. Whilst this is a temporary change, if you feel overwhelmed at times, then that is entirely understandable. I hope that you are finding ways to keep yourself psychologically well and of course supporting your families to achieve the same. The [Information for Parents and Carers](#) page on our website has some links to useful resources from the Anna Freud Centre which help us to support our children in understanding and coping with the coronavirus.

We are grateful to all those families who have continued to write to the school, thanking staff for continuing to provide a good quality of education. We are acting on the helpful feedback that we receive, along with that of the hundreds of students who we surveyed last week, and are endeavouring to make sure that the needs of all our students are being met.

The government has asked schools to remain open during the Easter break. For Sydenham School students that means that there will be a continuing provision for those students whose parents/carers are key workers or those students who are deemed to be 'vulnerable' by the government.

For the Easter holidays we will be sharing provision with Forest Hill School. This is because the joint numbers of children who need to attend are small but also because we want to ensure that most staff can have a restful and recognisable two-week Easter break.

If your child is making use of this provision the first week (beginning 6/4/20) will be based at the Forest Hill School site and the second week (beginning 13/4/20) will be based at the Sydenham School site. There will be a senior member of staff from each school when provision is on the 'opposite' site. Please liaise directly with Ms Gostling at d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk if you have any questions about this.

We have always placed a strong emphasis on working in partnership with families. Never has that belief and practice been more important and we know that our families are all having to adjust to support our students and keep learning happening. We are sure that you appreciate that some of our staff are juggling working from home with their own young families and have spoken of how hard this is. We are hugely appreciative of all that you are doing at home in order to ensure that the gaps in your child's learning and progress is as minimal as possible. We know too that some students are thriving and very much enjoying the opportunity to direct and shape their own learning journey.



E-Safety:

As we mentioned in our update last week, there is concern across all schools that one consequence of social distancing and school closures is increased screen time, and the resultant increase in vulnerability online. The government has published a list of recommended links for children and families to help with e-safety. We've written before to you about this, but these additional links may be of help.

For students:

Childline - for support

UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content

CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

London Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC

Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers

Keeping in Touch Over Easter:

If you email our staff you will notice that they have an out of office reply on their inboxes. This is because we think it is very important that our staff get time to recuperate after a very busy half term. We very much appreciate the support that I am sure that you will show our staff in understanding why we have done this.

However, 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 or to update us about an important situation in your family during the Easter holiday, please email updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

If you have a safeguarding concern about a student please call the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ms Quartey, on 07908 277599. If out of school hours and non-urgent, please leave a voicemail message or text and she will contact you as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency please contact the relevant emergency service on 999.

You may also find it useful to check these two pages on our website, which have answers to some frequently asked questions from parents/carers and students:

Information for Students: <https://www.sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk/about/information-for-students>

Information for Parents/Carers: <https://www.sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk/about/information-for-parents-and-families>



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Learning

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We hope that you have the chance to spend some relaxing time with your family this holiday and that your families are well. We hold any of you have family members who are in hospital in our thoughts. Please do not hesitate to contact us via the updates email address if you think that we can be of support.

Yours faithfully

G. Lowe

Gloria Lowe

Headteacher