



20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Families

### **Weekly Update: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

As we enter the fifth week of the coronavirus 'lockdown', we hope that you and your families are well and increasingly adjusting to all that is being asked of you. These are challenging times in many ways, including psychologically. We are all having to find novel ways to adjust to them.

#### **Learning from home:**

The details of home learning can continue to be found via this [link](#) on the school website. Our YLCs are writing to students in Years 7 to 10 today to remind them of the importance of planning their learning over the week. The email includes a timetable, in which we are encouraging students to allocate a time for each task they are set. This is deliberately flexible to allow for families to arrange schedules that meet their needs.

Several families have enquired whether we can run 'live' video lessons on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. We are trialling this for our peripatetic music lessons. Our concerns about safeguarding and the very unequal access to IT amongst families mean that we are unable to offer this to all our students more broadly. Our teachers are working hard to continue to adapt our approach to online learning. The feedback from the student survey has been invaluable. On Friday, we will email you a link to a parent/carers survey, to ask for your feedback on the learning this week.

You may be aware that over the weekend, the government has announced there will be some provision of IT and data for some students who are disadvantaged. New electronic learning resources from BBC Bitesize and a new provider, Oak National Academy, are also being released nationally today. When we have more details about this government initiative, we will share them with you.

#### **PTA Information and Support for Families**

Our PTA have very kindly produced an excellent resource, which provides links to sources of support for families on a wide range of issues related to the impacts of the pandemic. This is available to download from the [parent](#) information page of our website and links to advice on housing, unemployment and furlough, food, finance, relationship support and medical support. Pamela Sinnott and Fi Redpath, the co-chairs of the PTA, are very keen to work with the school to mitigate the impact of social distancing in any way possible. If you have any thoughts or ideas regarding how the PTA and



school could offer further support with this please email Pamela and Fi at [Sydenhamschpta@gmail.com](mailto:Sydenhamschpta@gmail.com).

### **Provision for key workers and vulnerable students:**

You will be aware that Sydenham School has continued to stay open during this period of closure for those students with parents/carers who are critical workers or those students who are vulnerable. Like you, school leaders have not been told how long schools across the country will remain closed for most of our students.

Given the significantly reduced numbers of students attending all schools at present, the Local Authority has encouraged schools to collaborate and offer a joint provision wherever possible. Sydenham School worked with Forest Hill School during the Easter holidays. Students spent one week at Sydenham School and the other week at Forest Hill School. The provision was in place for Good Friday as well as on Easter Monday.

This arrangement has been successful, and we will continue with this model. Provision during the week beginning 20th April will be at Forest Hill School. In the week beginning 27th April we will be based at Sydenham School. A member of the Senior Leadership Team from Sydenham School is always present when the provision is at Forest Hill School and vice versa. If you have any enquiries about this provision, please contact Ms Gostling directly at [d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).

### **Year 11 and 13 Examinations:**

You will be aware that the public exams will not take place this summer as a result of the pandemic. This decision has been a hard one for our students and their families to bear.

The government has informed schools about how exam grades will be calculated. The [letter](#) to Year 11 and Year 13 students sent out at the end of last term explained the process and we are writing to students again this week. We are working hard to ensure that every single student at Sydenham School and in SFH6 is able to receive a fair and accurate grade in every subject. Our SFH6 team are writing to all Year 11 offer holders today with details of learning to help prepare for the Sixth Form.

### **Staffing Update:**

Despite the lockdown, there is still staff movement. Sadly, we said goodbye to Ms Egginton, who left Sydenham at the end of the Easter term after eight years of dedicated service. We would like to thank Ms Egginton for all her hard work as Curriculum Leader for Humanities during which time student outcomes improved. Ms Egginton has moved out of London with her family and we wish her all the



very best in the future. We are pleased to report that we have appointed a new Curriculum Leader for Humanities, Ms Rachel Wiley, who has a strong track record. Ms Wiley will join us after the May half term.

We are pleased to welcome Ms Fullilove to Sydenham School. She joins us from today as Subject Leader for PE. Ms Fullilove is passionate about sport and the role that PE can play in ensuring the physical and mental wellbeing of young people. We know that families will share our delight that PE will return to an excellent standard both in school and beyond and that a difficult period in relation to PE provision has come to an end.

Our dedicated support staff have also been working hard to enable us to continue our normal staff recruitment. Despite the closures, we have continued to interview and appoint teachers to a wide range of posts for September.

### **Supporting your child and safeguarding:**

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

Our [parent](#) information page offers some useful resources that might support you and your children in coping with the ongoing emotional impact of this global crisis.

### **Performing Arts:**

At Sydenham School we recognise the power of the arts and sport to improve physical and mental health and well-being. Music, drama, dance, sport and the visual arts have been a way to remain active and emotionally connected during these challenging times. The positive impact of the arts and physical activity on our mental health and well-being is well documented. Whilst our arts and sports venues are closed, many performances, workshops and sports resources have been made available online. Our [parent](#) and [student](#) information pages include links to many of these resources. If you have further resources to share, please send these to Ms Durban, our Curriculum Leader for Performing Arts, at [e.durban@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.durban@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)

### **Communication from the school:**

The school is endeavouring to ensure that we effectively keep in touch with families during this lockdown. You should be receiving a regular weekly update from me every Monday. This replaces our



normal school SYD newsletter. Please check your junk mail, in case your email system is redirecting our email.

Your child receives a weekly update from their YLC each Monday and an email from their tutor every Wednesday. Every Wednesday your child will be asked to 'register' by completing a survey on Microsoft Forms. This provides us with very useful information to help us adapt our provision and ensure that your child is coping.

If you are aware of any families who have not been receiving communication from the school, please ask them to contact [updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).

We wish you the very best for the week ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) if you require any clarification about anything in this update.

Please do take the very best of care of yourself and each other.

Yours faithfully

Gloria Lowe

Headteacher