



4th May 2020

Dear Families

Weekly Update: 4th May 2020

We hope that you are keeping well and coping with the implications of the ongoing restrictions. The responses to our parent survey highlighted the number of families at Sydenham who have suffered a bereavement or seriously ill family member as a result of coronavirus. We are also aware of staff members who have experienced loss. This is a stark reminder of the seriousness of the current situation. Please know that all of our staff team hold your families in our thoughts.

The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, made it clear last week that when schools do eventually reopen it will be in a phased manner. A date for the reopening of schools has yet to be announced by the government. As a school, we are working hard to continue to develop our online provision and do the detailed planning required for a safe return to school. When we have more details we will update you as soon as we can.

In this letter there is information about the following:

1. Home learning
2. Maintaining healthy routines
3. Provision for the children of essential key workers and vulnerable students
4. The PTA fundraising appeal
5. Food parcels and support for families suffering hardship
6. VE Day 75 celebrations

Home Learning

Thank you for the responses to our Parent Survey about home learning, which were overwhelmingly positive. They also provided us with useful information about where to improve. In response to the feedback, we have made the following adaptations:



1. Timetable of the days that work is set: This [link](#) provides an overview of which day of the week work is set for each subject. We hope that it will help your child organise their work flow. Please remember that work doesn't all need to be completed on the day it is set. Our staff have adjusted deadlines to make them easier for students to meet. Please do not hesitate to contact a subject teacher if your child needs some additional guidance or is struggling to meet a deadline.

2. Reducing the number of platforms: Over the next fortnight History, Geography and Performing Arts are moving their work onto Microsoft Teams, rather than One Note or Edmodo. This is in response to feedback that students would prefer to have fewer platforms through which to access their work. This [link](#) shows the platforms used for each subject.

3. Improved use of Microsoft 365: We have run online training for our staff to help make remote learning more accessible. This has included the use of Microsoft Quizzes, Assignments in Teams and audio additions to resources. We hope that this will make it easier for students to access and interact with the work.

4. Organisation of Emails: We have written to students to give them guidance on setting up folders in their email inbox (see the guide in the [Information for Students](#) factsheet). Please encourage your child to do this to help organise their work. Many students are also using their Student Planner to allocate tasks or subjects to particular days and track work completion.

Please ensure your child knows that they should not select 'Reply All' to an email from a member of staff or copy large numbers of students in to an email. This is so that we protect other students from being confused by emails that aren't relevant to them. If your child gets lots of Reply All emails this week, please alert the relevant teacher or tutor so that we can follow it up.

Maintaining healthy routines

Last week we surveyed students about their work routines and fitness habits. We were very pleased to see that so many of our students have developed a healthy routine during this difficult time. We are very appreciative of all the work that parents and carers are doing to encourage this. If you would like to support your child to develop a healthier routine, you may find the ['Supporting Home Learning Routines'](#) checklist helpful. There is also some excellent advice from our students in the first edition of our student-led newsletter [Living Under Lockdown](#).



Ms Fullilove, our new Subject Leader for PE will contact students who have indicated that they are not exercising regularly. She will give advice about getting started on a programme to improve their fitness. If you would like any advice about how to encourage exercise at home, please contact Ms Fullilove at a.fullilove@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk. You may also find the links in the [parent and carer factsheet](#) helpful.

Provision for the children of essential key workers and vulnerable students:

We have been very grateful to Mr Sullivan, Headteacher of Forest Hill School, and his team for sharing this with us for the past month. We have been able to arrange to keep the Sydenham site open for the next two weeks and so will back at Sydenham for the next fortnight. Please contact Ms Gostling at d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk if you have any questions about this provision.

PTA Fundraising Appeal:

Thank you to everyone who has shared our fundraising appeal with friends and family. So far the PTA has raised over £7000 to help provide IT for those who lack a device at home and support families suffering hardship. Please continue to share the [link to the appeal](#) wherever you can.

We are also grateful to the team at Sydenham High School who are launching the #SE26CharityChallenge. This is based around the SE26 postcode and is linked to our appeal as well as NHS charities.

Food parcels and support for families suffering from hardship:

We have had several families contact us this week to let us know that the changed circumstances are causing considerable hardship. Please do not hesitate to contact Ms Wijnberg on e.wijnberg@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk if you require additional help.

If you are struggling to provide food for your family, emergency food parcels are available from Lewisham Local. Please call them on 03330 150378. The phone number will be charged at the standard network rate but calls from mobiles may be higher, please check with your provider for more details. The phone line is working but is very busy so please do try again if



you don't get through first time. Alternatively, you can complete the web form using this link:
<https://www.lewishamlocal.com/request-support>

VE Day 75

You will be aware I am sure, that on Friday 8th May it is VE Day 75. 'Victory in Europe Day' or VE Day occurred on 8th May 1945 and marked the end of World War 2. VE Day was greeted by scenes of celebration across the UK and around the world. It is important that we remember the ending of a war that involved the loss of so many human lives.

The History Department are running a poster competition to celebrate VE Day. If your child wants to take part, then they should email a photo or scanned version of their poster to Ms. Stoddart (j.stoddart@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) by **Thursday 7th May**. The winning posters will be retweeted on the school Twitter page.

For more information on VE Day and how you can mark the occasion with your family, this link may be helpful. <https://ve-veday75.gov.uk/get-involved/>

I do hope that the week ahead is a positive one for you and your children. Please do let the school know via updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk if there is anything that we can do to support further.

Yours faithfully

Gloria Lowe
Headteacher