



11th May 2020

Dear Families

Weekly Update: 11th May 2020

I hope that you are well and managing to adjust to these unusual times. We hope that your children are continuing to adapt to learning at home. We have been very impressed by how students have established healthy habits and routines. The next student newsletter, Living Under Lockdown, comes out this week and shares more of the positive news from our student body about how they are responding to the situation.

Sydenham School remains partially open for those students whose parents or carers are key workers. Clapping for NHS staff and key workers every Thursday at 8pm has become an important part of my week. It is an opportunity to thank all of those that continue to provide services during the lockdown.

In this letter there is information about:

1. The Government's announcement about possible school reopening plans
2. Home learning
3. The Sydenham PTA fundraising campaign
4. Assessments in Science
5. Safeguarding and the risk of domestic abuse
6. Provision for vulnerable students and the children of essential key workers
7. Support for families experiencing hardship or those struggling to access IT
8. Lewisham Music Virtual Choir

1. The Government's announcement about possible school reopening plans

You will be aware of the Prime Minister's announcement last night about the next phase of the lockdown. This included some reference to the possible reopening of schools. School leaders only know what might happen when we hear it on television too. As I write, we are awaiting further clarification from the government.

Our staff team has been working hard to plan for reopening. These plans will adapt to any government guidance. Our plans are extensive and include consideration of:

- what the curriculum and timetable will look like
- new hygiene and social distancing protocols
- travel to and from school
- how we can support the mental well being of the school community
- provision of PPE for our first aiders and other relevant staff.



You may be aware that the school donated a lot of our PPE to the NHS at the start of the lock down. We have been very grateful to Mr Bima, from our DT team, who has made PPE for the First Aiders who are on site.

As soon as we are in a position to share more with you, we will update you as soon as possible. We know that this uncertainty can be unsettling.

2. Home learning

Last week we wrote to you about how we had responded to your feedback on home learning. Please remember that the overview of advice on home learning can be found at these two pages on our website:

[Information for Parents and Carers](#)

[Information for Students](#)

3. The Sydenham PTA fundraising campaign

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the [PTA fundraising appeal](#). It has been a brilliant collective response. At the time of writing, £ 9,503 has been raised to support students who do not have ready access to laptops. At Sydenham School we want all of our students to have the same opportunities.

Our PTA have launched the 2.6 Challenge. YLCs have written to students today with ideas from Ms Fullilove, our new Subject Leader for PE, for completing the challenge. Here is a message from the PTA about it:

"A huge thank you to everyone who has responded to our DonateMySchool fundraising campaign. We have been overwhelmed by your generosity and are close to breaking our target of £ 10,000. Further funds will enable the PTA to continue supporting the school's drive to reduce inequality in access to IT. We will also be able to help more families who are experiencing hardship due to COVID-19.

We are asking students and their families to sign up to do one activity to raise money for the fund. The theme is 26/2.6, inspired by the recent charity fundraising campaign and tying in with SE26, where our school is located. We hope that signing up and sharing our challenges will help us all feel a little more connected.

Here's how it works:

Step 1 - Choose a challenge with a 2.6, 26 or even 260 theme. It could be going on a 2.6km walk, balancing 26 things on your head, baking 26 cupcakes...



*Step 2 – Ask people to sponsor your activity, before, during or after. Talk about your challenge and why you're raising funds, take a few photos or a video of you/your family doing your challenge and post them on social media (Twitter or Instagram) with the hashtags #SydenhamSchool2point6challenge #SydenhamSchool and #SydenhamPTA. **Please remember to protect your personal details online.***

Step 3 - Don't forget to include the link to the fundraising platform <https://donatemyschool.com/sydenhamschoolpta2170> and ask your family and friends to make their donations online.

We look forward to seeing your challenges.”

4. Assessments in Science:

The Science Faculty are going to pilot assessing students online using Microsoft Teams. This is to help students strengthen their science subject knowledge and enable teachers to identify learning gaps. This is vital when planning for the year ahead. The details of these assessments are in the letter found at this [link](#). We hope that by giving advance warning of these assessments, students have the chance to plan for them.

The knowledge and understanding that your child will need to complete these assessments is outlined in checklists. These can be found by clicking on the link in the [letter](#). The checklists can be helpful to support your child with retrieval practice. A reminder of what retrieval practice is can be found in the Sydenham School Study Guide, which is available at this [link](#) or in the Student Planner.

Once we have greater clarity this week on the possibility of school reopening for different year groups, we will finalise assessment plans for all of our other subjects.

5. Safeguarding and the risk of domestic abuse:

As a response to COVID-19 all schools and colleges have had to issue an addendum to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Our addendum has been agreed by governors and can now be found on our website at this [link](#). Safeguarding is central to our work at Sydenham and we consider this to be our 'golden thread.'

In light of COVID-19 and lockdown we know that nationally there has been an increase in domestic abuse. If you are experiencing domestic abuse or you know of a family who is, please contact:



- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Emma Quartey on 07908 277599
- The National Domestic Abuse helpline on 0808 2000 247
- Athena (run by Refuge and based in Lewisham) on 0800 112 4052.

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

We remain open for vulnerable students and the children of essential key workers. If you need to contact us about this provision, please email Ms Gostling at d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk.

7. Support for families experiencing hardship or those struggling to access IT

Please contact Ms Wijnberg at e.wijnberg@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk if:

- Your child doesn't have adequate access to IT to complete the home learning
- Your family is experiencing hardship as a result of Covid-19.

If you prefer, you can contact your child's YLC or allocated staff member from Inclusion who will pass on your message.

8. Lewisham Music Service Virtual Choir

Singing is a powerful tool which can help us to feel connected and improve our mental health, despite our physical distance. The Lewisham Music Service are launching a Virtual Choir for Years 7 and 8 this Friday at 3pm. We hope that many of our Key Stage 3 performers will get involved. For more details on how your child can take part please see these links:

<https://www.lewishammusic.org/learnwithus/zooom-choirs/>

[Information for Parents and Carers](#) (Information for Parents and Carers Factsheet)

As always, we hope that your families are well and wish you the very best for this week ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact us at updates@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk if we can be of help in any way.

Yours faithfully

Gloria Lowe
Headteacher