



5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Update following the Prime Minister's Announcement – 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

As we digest the news of the Prime Minister's announcement from last night, we wanted to write to you with an update about how this affects the school community. We are sure you share our very profound sadness at the announcement and our hope that the vaccine offers us all a rapid way out of the current situation. Sydenham School is a strong and vibrant community and it is a great joy to see our students engrossed in learning in our classrooms, our performance spaces, our library and our sports facilities. That this has once again been put on hold is a source of real regret.

It is our sincere intention to ensure that we do everything we possibly can to keep learning on track during these next few weeks and to ensure that we fully support your child. We know that this will not be an easy time for them, or for you. Please do contact us immediately if you have any concerns.

### **Remote learning until at least February half term**

As you will have heard in the news, schools across England will move to remote learning for all year groups until at least February half term. This is a change from the information that we communicated to you on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Students who are the child of a Critical Worker, or who have been directly contacted by us because they have a Social Worker or EHCP, will continue to be eligible for our Critical Worker provision. Please see the details below from Ms Gostling.

### **Live Lessons via Teams**

All students should be engaged in learning during the hours of their normal school day, along with additional time for homework. We will take a SIMS register at the start of each live lesson to ensure that students are engaging fully with remote learning and will contact you if we have concerns about attendance to these lessons.

We hope that the provision of live lessons in this way helps to reduce some of the challenges of managing your child's time whilst they are away from the school site. Please do contact us if you have any feedback about the remote learning over the next few weeks. Please note that if a teacher is unwell, we will set cover work and there will not be a live lesson.

Students should check their school email addresses and their Teams calendar for the invitations to 'live' lessons which will take place during normal lesson times. Details of work set will be posted on Show My Homework.



If your child has difficulty logging in, please contact [PasswordReset@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:PasswordReset@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk). If your child has difficulty accessing Show My Homework, please contact Mr Freakes at [m.freakes@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:m.freakes@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).

### **Public Examinations**

Please note that the government has confirmed that the public exams for some BTEC courses in the Sixth Form as well as for the Child Development course in Year 11 will take place as planned. We will contact the affected students directly about the plans for this.

The Prime Minister's statement also has implications for the examinations for students in Years 11 and 13. We are awaiting further guidance from the Department for Education about this and will contact the families of these year groups separately. Years 11 and 13 students should continue with all of their remote learning as normal.

### **Provision for the children of Critical Workers and those with a Social Worker or an EHCP**

If you are a Critical Worker, your child will be eligible to attend school in person. If you would like your child to attend, and you have not already informed us of this, please complete the booking form at this [link](#) and email Ms Gostling at [d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) if you have any questions about this.

If you have already completed the form, we will assume that you want your child to attend throughout the lockdown period, unless you contact us directly. Your child should attend each day at their normal start and finish times and should wear full school uniform.

If your child has a Social Worker or an EHCP, we will have contacted you directly before the holidays about your child attending school in person. Please contact Ms Quartey at [e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) if you have any questions related to this provision.

### **Tutor Sessions and the Pastoral Programme**

We will be running assemblies for your child, and they should check their Teams calendar for details of these sessions. Our tutors will also be working with our wider pastoral team on a rolling programme of contact with home to maintain contact and connectedness between school and home. Please do continue to liaise with your child's tutor over any concerns that you may have.

*The first assembly for Year 7, 8 and 9 will be held tomorrow morning at 8.55am. Your child will have received an email from Ms Gostling with the link to this assembly.*

### **Mass Testing for Covid-19 at Sydenham School**

We have been indebted to all of the parents and carers who have so kindly offered us their help and support with the plans for mass testing. A line from one parent was particularly heartening and humbling to read, 'Like most of the parent body, I will do anything I can do to support you at this time - you only have to say the word!'



As you can appreciate, the plans for mass testing are currently on hold whilst we await more information about the return to schools. We will be in contact with everyone who has volunteered directly so that we are ready to mobilise our plans as and when required.

### **Provision for students who are eligible for Free School Meals**

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, you should have received an email with a link to a form for you to apply for your voucher for the next two weeks. If you have any questions about this, please contact our Director of Resources, Charlotte Finch, at [c.finch@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:c.finch@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)

### **Peripatetic Music Lessons**

If your child is signed up for peripatetic music lessons, your child will receive a Teams invite so that they can continue with their music lessons remotely. If your child receives peripatetic music lessons but is attending our Critical Worker provision, Ms Durban, will make arrangements for the music lesson to continue on site.

### **Safeguarding**

If you have a safeguarding concern about your child or any child that attends Sydenham School, please email our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ms Quartey, at [e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) or call Ms Quartey directly during school hours via our Main School Reception. If there is an emergency, please contact 999.

Please do not hesitate to contact either your child's tutor or our [info@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) if you have any further questions or if we can be of further support in any way. We wish you well in the weeks ahead. Please do look after yourselves and each other.

Yours sincerely

Gloria Lowe

Headteacher