



Monday, 18 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

## **Weekly Update for Families – 18/01/2021**

I hope that your week has been manageable and that you are looking forward to the week ahead. We continue to be pleased with the high levels of engagement of our students as regards 'live lessons' and you will have seen in the SYD newsletter that went out on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January, an example of a 'live' lesson in action, expertly taught by Ms Durban, Curriculum Leader for Performing Arts. Please can all of our families ensure that their child is logged onto their TEAMS app for the start of the school day and that they actively participate in every lesson throughout each day.

We are aware of the amount of screen time that we are expecting our students and staff to undertake each day and that you too as families have concerns about this. In order to break this up somewhat, please do expect teachers to set tasks during the lesson which allow for independent learning. This enables students to think for themselves and the teacher to support learning in a way that is not 'screen dependent'.

We appreciate all that you are doing to keep your children working hard at home and we do not underestimate how hard it is for many families to be juggling their own work schedules with supervising the remote learning of their children. Please try to use this period of 'lockdown' as an opportunity to strengthen your child's independent learning skills, self-regulation and resourcefulness. As ever, nevertheless, if you need support with any aspects of your child's education, please do contact the relevant member of staff at school.

The school site remains open to those students whose parents/carers are 'Critical Workers' and those who have a Social Worker or an EHCP. I would like to thank those colleagues who continue to travel into work and to care for the students who are at school. The students at school participate in 'live' learning and log on in the same way that their peers do at home. This is testimony to the improvements that the school has made during the last few months as regards online learning and teaching.

I do hope that those families who attended the Year 12 Parents' Meeting last week (remotely) found it useful. The technology that we have in place has been enormously helpful in supporting the school in continuing to have meaningful contact with families about the ongoing progress of their children. I would like to thank all the staff involved in the Parents' Meeting, the Sixth Form admin team for their sterling work and Ms Pooley, Ms Harbon and



Ms Syers for their leadership of the event. We will be writing to Year 8 parents and carers about the upcoming Year 8 Parents' Evening later this week.

Finally, we are confident that those students who are entitled to have the use of a laptop at home will receive one from the school by the end of this week. We are very grateful to the Department for Education as regards the laptops that we have recently been sent from them and the school is now carefully distributing these devices to our students. Our IT team and Reception staff have worked very hard to ensure that this has been a smooth and respectful process.

### **Mass Testing**

We have now got our daily Covid testing programme firmly established on the school site and have conducted almost 200 tests in the past seven days. Ms Gostling wrote to all parents and carers about the consent form for mass testing last week. We would be grateful if all families would complete the consent form found at this [link](#) by 6pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January to indicate your consent for this testing when students return back to school.

If you have any questions about the testing, including about some of the recent media coverage, please post these into this [Microsoft Forms link](#). We are hosting a Teams Live Event at 4pm on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January to address the questions that you may have. You will be able to access this event via this [link](#). Please note that you cannot indicate consent, or otherwise, via the question form, you must use the consent form link.

We look forward to continuing to work in active partnership with all of our families, with the aim of securing the very best outcomes in all areas for your children. We wish you all the very best in the week ahead. Please do look after yourselves and each other.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lowe



## **Frequently Asked Questions – January 2021**

### **How will my child learn online?**

Students are continuing to follow their usual school timetable, attending 'live' lessons using Microsoft Teams. Students will receive invitations to their lessons via their Teams calendar and email notifications. Homework will continue to be set on Show My Homework. Students should log on at the start of period 1 and will need to check their school email daily.

We have been very impressed at how well students have been responding to these lessons since the beginning of the Spring term and we are grateful to staff who are working very hard to adapt their lessons for online learning.

Please see the section below on laptops if your child does not have access to a device or Wi-Fi to attend these lessons.

### **If my child does not have digital or online access at home, how will you support them to access remote education?**

We recognise that some students may not have suitable online access at home. We take the following approaches to support those students to access remote education:

- Students who need to loan a laptop because they do not have a device at home, or do not have access to a reliable internet connection, should contact Ms Wijnberg at [e.wijnberg@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.wijnberg@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk). Students in receipt of Free School Meals will be prioritised.
- Students who do not have access to adequate mobile data can complete the form on this link to increase their allowance up until 31/01/21: [Increase Mobile Data Form](#)
- Students requiring printed materials should contact their Year Learning Coordinator.

### **My child is entitled to Free School Meals. How can I access the vouchers for these?**

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals you will be sent vouchers once you have completed this form which can be found on this link [Free School Meal Voucher Claim Form](#). 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).

### **Do I need to inform the school if my child tests positive for COVID-19 but has not been in school?**



If your child has not been attending school, we do not need to track and trace on their behalf. You should however, still contact the attendance team at [attendance@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) to inform them so that we are aware when your child is absent from their lessons online.

### **What do I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19 and they have been attending school?**

If your child does develop COVID-19 symptoms and they have been attending school because they are the child of a Critical Worker, they have a Social Worker or an EHCP, then please inform the school using the [covid@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:covid@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) as usual. Please copy in Ms Gostling ([d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:d.gostling@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)) and Ms Wijnberg ([e.wijnberg@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.wijnberg@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)).

### **How is my child's attendance to lessons tracked?**

The register will continue to be taken for every remote lesson. A text will be sent to parents/carers if your child does not attend. If your child will need to be absent from remote learning please inform the attendance team with the reason: [attendance@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)

The Year Learning Co-ordinator for each year group will continue to track the overall attendance of all students in their year group and work with families to support and reward excellent attendance.

### **How is my child's attendance to school recorded?**

All students who are not expected to attend school during this period will have their attendance recorded as an 'X' code and this will not impact their overall attendance figures. All students considered a vulnerable student are expected to be in school. The key professional assigned to that child will work with the family to ensure they attend and complete a Risk Assessment. If the parent/carer chooses for the child not to attend, this will be recorded as a 'C' code, which is an authorised absence.

### **Where can I find more information on Attendance during the COVID- 19 pandemic?**

There is a Sydenham School Attendance Policy Covid -19 addendum which can be found on the school's website.

### **How will the school keep in contact with my child whilst we are in lockdown?**



Our tutors and pastoral team have a rota for calling students over the next few weeks, so they should receive a call from us. We will run weekly assemblies with SLT on Wednesdays during tutor times.

### **I am concerned about the well-being of my child. Where can I access support for my child?**

All staff at Sydenham School have received awareness training in supporting mental health and well-being. In the first instance, you may wish to discuss this matter with your child's tutor who can refer you to a member of our Inclusion Faculty to discuss the most appropriate support.

All our Learning Mentors are Mental Health First Aiders and we are also a partner school with the Lewisham Mental Health Support Team (MHST) which is a part of CAMHS. For Sixth Form students we have commissioned a service from Discover which is part of CAMHS and focuses on students aged 16-19. Please contact the Sixth Form team for more information. We can also make referrals to a range of counselling support services such as Compass or art therapy as well as to our onsite Youth Coach.

### **What online services do you recommend to support the mental health and well-being of children?**

Below is a small selection of some of the online resources we recommend:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>

<https://www.kooth.com/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

A greater range can be found on our parent/carer directory on the website:

<https://www.sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk/information/parents-useful-links>

### **I would like more guidance as a parent/carer to support the well-being of my child. What could I do?**

The Mental Health Support Team offer Virtual Coffee Mornings every Thursday and Friday between 10-11am. If you are interested and would like to join please email:

[LewishamMHST@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:LewishamMHST@slam.nhs.uk)

In addition, we are working with ParentEngage, which is a Lewisham parent run organisation which is offering free online resilience and well-being workshops specifically for Sydenham School parents/carers. A workshop is running this week and we hope to offer more in the future.



## **What should I do if I have any safeguarding concerns about my child or a child that attends Sydenham School?**

Please contact Emma Quartey, Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead, on 07908 277599 during school hours, or send an email to:

[e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)

## **How can I find more information about the Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements at this time?**

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2020-21 is on the school website. There is a COVID-19 addendum which can also be found on the website:

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1610634265/sydenhamlewishamschuk/tbh0wedj1pvz3bxdnv0g/AddendumACovid19SafeguardingarrangementsFINAL.pdf>

## **What should I do if I have any online safety concerns in relation to my child?**

If you have any concerns about any online safety issues for your child, please report these to Emma Quartey as above. We have delivered an assembly to students on keeping well online, which also includes what to do if there is any cyberbullying. Please go through this and discuss with your child. The assembly can be found here:

<https://sway.office.com/ON8Itkz6GroNe8I4?ref=Link>

If you would like more information as a parent/carer, the Department for Education has published this guidance with some useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

In addition, co-ordinated by Prevent, the “Let’s Talk About It” website

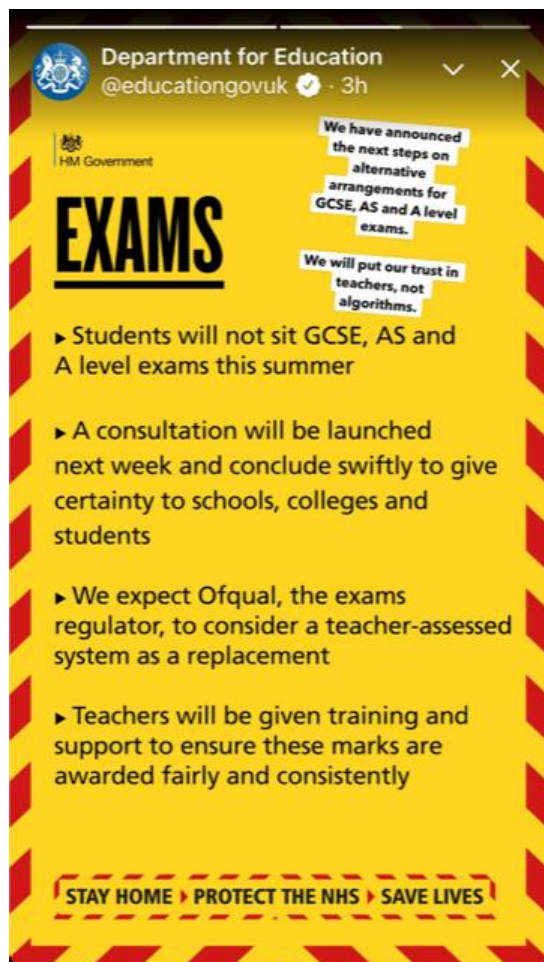
<https://www.ltai.info/>, is aimed at young and vulnerable people who could be at risk of being groomed by extremist individuals and groups online. There will be an assembly for all students in the next few weeks focused on online grooming, which includes extremism.

## **Have there been any changes to how students apply to University?**

UCAS has announced that the deadline to apply for University has been extended to the 29<sup>th</sup> January. Any student who is intending to send off an application and has not yet done so should contact Ms Pooley. We are delighted that we have already had 97 applications sent off and 80 students have so far received some or all of their offers.

Students who would like some support with applying for apprenticeships should contact our Careers Co-Ordinator, Ms Taylor, [f.taylor@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:f.taylor@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)

## How are the Year 11 and Year 13 exam grades going to be awarded this summer?



On 6<sup>th</sup> January, The Education Secretary confirmed that GCSE and A Level exams would not take place this summer. This was dramatic news.

As a school, we also made the decision not to continue with the BTEC exams scheduled for this month. The government has said that Teacher Assessment will take the place of the exams and we expect to get more detail about what this means following a national consultation period. In the meantime, it is really important that students continue to learn and to make progress, attending their 'live lessons' and completing any coursework. Once we have a clearer understanding of how the Teacher Assessed Grades will be awarded, we will of course give you more information.