



WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL
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Monday 20th April 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope that you and your families are well although we know that some in our school community have been badly affected by the coronavirus outbreak. Our thoughts are with these families. We know that the whole community will be doing what they can to support their friends at this difficult time. We have always been so impressed with the resilience of the boys at William Ellis, and the way that they rally round the people they care about, and we know that this situation will be no different – our boys will do the very best to do what they can to listen to, sympathise and cheer up both their family members and their friends.

We are all coming to terms with this difficult and unsettling situation, which continues to present challenges to all of us. Some of these challenges are universal, whilst others will be very specific to our individual situations. One thing we can all do to help ourselves is to develop a positive routine. Good routines are beneficial to our mental health and general wellbeing, especially if our routine incorporates physical exercise. We will continue to provide advice and guidance about this and other matters on the school website.

Home learning

In school, we continue to develop our understanding of how we can make home learning as effective as possible.

The main purpose of this letter is to let you know the plans for supporting home learning over the next half term. As you know, up until this time the school's provision has mainly been through Teams on Office 365. The ongoing plan is to continue to use Teams but to complement this with paper resources for all students.

Over the Easter period, we have assembled packs to send home to every student in Years 7 to 10. These packs contain a learning plan and resources for each subject to cover the next half term. For students in Years 8 to 10 the packs have been personalised which means that the work is specific to your son's subjects and teaching groups. The learning plans and the resources, except for the English texts, will also be available on the school website and through Teams.

The packs are quite large and may not fit through smaller letter boxes so please keep your eye out for them. The Year 10 packs are particularly big, because of this we will be asking boys to come and pick their pack up. Mr Scott will send a separate note about the arrangements for this.

As mentioned earlier, we are continuing to develop our understanding of effective home learning and this has been informed by feedback from students and parents. Thank you to those parents and carers who completed the recent short online survey about home learning. We will be issuing another survey later this term but if you would like to give us feedback before this, please get in contact.

We know that a small number of students have struggled to access the learning resources on Teams. The packs posted home will help these students as well as reducing the amount of time all students need to spend online and looking at a screen. School laptops will be sent to identified students to help them access learning at home, the software has been changed over Easter so that they can be used off-site.

Government support for home learning

Yesterday afternoon, Sunday 19th April, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, announced several initiatives to support home learning:

- Disadvantaged children across England will receive laptops and tablets to assist with making remote education accessible for all students staying at home.
- The Government will provide 4G routers to make sure disadvantaged secondary school pupils and care leavers can access the internet.
- The [Oak National Academy](#) will launch on Monday 20 April. It will provide 180 video lessons each week, across a broad range of subjects from maths to art to languages, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. The BBC is launching its own [education package](#) across TV and online to help keep children learning and supporting parents.
- [New guidance](#) published on Sunday 19 April for parents on how best to support their child's education and development.

The work from the BBC and Oak National Academy will complement the work set through paper resources and Office 365, but should not be followed instead of what is set by teachers at William Ellis.

As we get more information about these matters, we will let you know through the weekly Pastoral newsletter.

Free School Meals

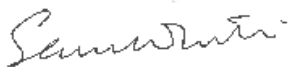
We have now moved across to the national voucher scheme for Free School Meals. If your child is eligible for free school meals and you have not received the information about this, please contact the school as soon as possible. You can find tips on how to claim and use the voucher in local supermarkets [here](#).

Student wellbeing and safety

Mr Lane will be writing to students this week with some specific information to support their wellbeing and safety while school is closed. He will also send a copy to parents and carers.

Finally, my very best wishes to all in our school community and your wider family and friends. Please continue to support each other and show consideration and kindness to others. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you think we can be of support.

Yours faithfully,



Sam White