

5 January 2021

Dear Parents & Carers

I am writing to you today with what I suspect will be the first of many letters about this new national lockdown. I found out about this as you did, in a live broadcast at 8pm last night, and we have been working on a response ever since. As has been the case since March, we will always do our best to support our students and I appreciate all of your cooperation and understanding at such a busy time.

You will know that since September we have been training our staff and students to become accustomed to using Microsoft Teams for remote learning, and despite a few teething problems this is going well today. Our teachers have been in school delivering live lessons and also putting resources on the Work from Home team for each year group. It has been lovely to see and hear so many pupils working from home.

This lockdown is different and schools have a statutory duty to ensure pupils are provided with remote learning and teaching and that they engage and make progress. We are obliged to inform you if your child does not join in so that you can ensure they do not fall further behind. With this in mind we have come up with a process which will get us started but may change over time.

Live Assembly

Thank you to all of you who made sure your child was out of bed and in the assembly with their learning manager from 8.25am this morning. We will hold this assembly every morning during lockdown. It is a nice way to start the day and keeps everyone in touch as the whole year group logs in to hear key messages from their learning manager. If your child does not attend this assembly we will send you a message via School Gateway.

Live lessons

Every day every child will have at least two live lessons. This will include an activity which must be returned to show they have been involved in their lesson rather than just joining the meeting and then playing on their X-Box. This is something which is a recurring problem – parents think their child is engaged but they are not – so do check on their progress from time to time. If your child is not joining in lessons or submitting the work requested we will contact you again by School Gateway and you can eventually expect a phone call. This is because we know how hard it is to work from home and we want to help everyone to stay involved.

Work at Home & Booklets

Every year group has their own Work at Home group. This is where work is set to complete independently, without live teaching. We are working on a new timetable for each year group which will incorporate some work booklets and time away from the screen because we recognise it is not healthy or practical to be in front of a screen for 5 hours a day. Over the next few days, once we have got everything ready, we will ask pupils to come in and collect resources to support them at home. These packs will include resources to support mental health and personal development including careers and citizenship education.

Vulnerable children and children of Critical Workers

We continue to remain open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. If you require a place please contact the academy. You will then receive a call back from a learning manager who will talk to you about your requirements. Once a place is confirmed you will also have to complete and return the Key Worker form on our website: [Letters | De Warenne Academy](#)

Government promises

We await clarification about whether the Government will provide Free School Meals vouchers again. Boris Johnson did say he will make more devices available to schools but please remember that last time around those promised in March arrived in school in July – on the last day of term.

I will also be sending you some information and a consent form for lateral flow testing. As I said – I think I will be writing to you quite a lot over the next few days and weeks. In the meantime, please get in touch with any questions or issues, bearing in mind our phones have been ringing all day!

Kind regards

Anna Rooney
Principal