

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope that you will have had a peaceful Easter and that our whole school community has been able to keep safe.

All around the country schools and whole communities spent the two weeks prior to the holidays learning to work remotely. Some parents are worrying that their children do not have enough work whilst others are feeling the pressure of overload. Other parents are worrying that their children do not have IT facilities and teachers are worrying that they are not doing a good enough job setting and collecting work in. This is so entirely new for everyone and we have all learned much over two weeks. Like many other schools across the country at John O'Gaunt School, we recognise that this has been what we call the "Initial Phase" – phase 1. Remember that we (schools and families) only had a week to plan this and respond to school closure and remote learning, so whatever we all achieved in that fortnight, we should feel proud of how hard everyone tried.

Staff at JoG continue to work hard (at home and in school, following a rota system). Parents too, are doing a brilliant job of trying to keep order and structure, whilst inspiring and motivating children, and in many cases worrying about finances, older relatives and carrying on working themselves. All our staff with young / school age families understand exactly how hard this is.

So we have learned much, and have had the Easter break to reflect; we have explored the national picture and now, we adapt. Moving on from the Easter holiday takes us into what we are recognising as the "Adjustment phase" – phase 2.

Below are some constructive headlines for parents shared today by an organisation called The Key, which many schools use for common sense advice, much of which is contained in the headline – please use this or ignore it as appropriate to your needs:

**Be realistic about what you can do.** You are not expected to become teachers and your children are not expected to learn as they do in school. Simply providing your children with some structure at home will help them to adapt. Use the tips below to help you make this work for your household:

- Ask your children, involve them too
- Share the load if there are other adults at home
- Split the day into 2-4 hour slots and take turns so you can do your own work – **see the new proposed timetable below, for JoG students in Years 7-10 only.** However, be flexible (If a task/activity is going well or they want more time, let it extend where possible)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
KS3 and KS4	Maths	Science	Geography	English	Science
	English	History	Art	Maths	Languages
	Music	Drama	Media	Technology	RS
	PE - being active	PE - being active	PE - being active	PE - being active	PE - being active
KS4 further options		CNAT Sport		CNAT ICT	

- Create and stick to a routine if you can. This is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they are dressed before starting the 'school' day – avoid staying in pyjamas!
- If you have more than one child at home, consider combining their timetables. For example, they might exercise and do maths together – see what works for your household
- At the end of the day have a clear cut-off to signal school time is over
- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends, to separate school life and home life
- More importantly, take care of your own health and wellbeing (remember the advice on airplanes to put your own oxygen mask on before helping others!)

What is clear is that no family should feel additional pressure within their household to keep up with “the curriculum”. What is more important is that your children enjoy leading their learning with the work we are setting, that they read daily, and that they keep to regular learning routines.

When schools do open again, we will then move into what we call the “Recovery phase” – phase 3. During this time, we will be re-building routines and habits, before we then move on to re-starting the curriculum. At that point, we will have plans in place to ensure that all children are appropriately supported, stretched or challenged in picking up from where we left off on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

As we now look forward to Term 5, I also wanted to remind you of a few other points:

- Teaching clips will be prepared this term to be uploaded to YouTube (more details soon)
- Staff will be working hard to review **every Year 11 student grade for each subject**, with integrity and professionalism to ensure that each student is awarded the grade he / she deserves. We will also work hard to ensure that their post-16 providers get in touch with them, if possible, so students can start preparing for September. For now, they should continue some work relevant to their Sixth-Form choices; JoG staff will also be happy to continue offering feedback, if students forward work. **The Government have just announced that grades will be released to students on the original date: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020.**
- Staff will upload new work on Class Charts and paper packs are being posted today for those without any IT equipment. If students know how to use Teams, they can also communicate that way with their teachers. Work should be returned to staff via emails / Class Charts / Teams or left in a clearly labelled envelope, in the foyer area or posted. We will collect work every day and distribute it to the relevant staff.

**The Excalibur IT staff have done a huge amount of work to support the use and development of Teams for schools. Please use this link to learn how to set it up and use it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I14MWTXz->**

- We are preparing a Year 10 assessment pack, which we will set for the last week of Term 5. Year 10 would have had an exam, so it is important that we give them a goal, even though we recognise that the circumstances will inevitably be very different.

Finally, Safeguarding is at the forefront of all that we do in schools and whilst we are in contact with many families, it is impossible to be aware of everything. Please, do not hesitate to email us if you need any help or feel concerned about anything. There have been regular updates sent to you, which have all been uploaded to our [Website](#). There, you will find useful links, information and advice for children, parents, carers and practitioners covering a wide range of subjects, including domestic abuse, emotional health, financial help, coping strategies for new parents, home schooling, keeping children safe on-line etc...

Do stay safe; all my colleagues join me in wishing you and our students a peaceful Term 5.

Kindest regards,



**Corinne Walker**  
**Head of School**

