

5th February 2021

Dear parents/carers,

Re: Feedback and next steps from remote learning surveys

Firstly, I hope that this email finds you and your family well. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support for the school and your children as we all continue in our endeavours to educate them in the current climate. It has been heart-warming to receive many communications of thanks to the staff and knowing that we have your backing means a great deal to all of us.

As you know, we recently issued a survey to both you and your children about our remote provision, and we promised that we would feed back to you about our findings. Therefore, I have attached an Appendix to this letter outlining the main findings and we will place a fully detailed document on the website under the 'COVID-19' tab in due course. The summary below also sets out our response in full, but there are a few specific things that I'd like to draw your attention to here.

Wellbeing and catch-up day:

Something that came through very clearly from the surveys, and is also of concern to our staff, is the fatigue that working remotely can bring. Therefore, in addition to our current measures, we have decided to suspend the formal timetable for one day in favour of giving time over for a 'Wellbeing and catch-up day'. This will take place on **Friday 12th February 2021**. There will be no live lessons on this date, but students will be set tasks to complete and, if they are up-to-date with work, extension or challenge activities. A 'menu' of other activities will also be offered on the 12th, to encourage students to step away from their screens and look after their wellbeing. **To be clear, this is not a day off for students or staff** and we will be sending out details of how the day will be structured nearer the time. We will continue to be open for vulnerable students and children of key workers to attend the school site on the 12th, although those students who usually attend this provision will have the option to work at home on this day. We will contact relevant families separately about this.

We will also be using the 12th as an opportunity to try and make contact with all families and catch up with you about how you are all doing. All available staff will be involved in making these calls so you may be called by a colleague you haven't spoken to before. The calls supplement our normal contacts and will focus on wellbeing, how we can support you and celebrating any success so far. Of course, please do not hesitate to contact relevant staff as usual if you have queries in the meantime. We really hope that this will be a valuable day for all our students!

Homework:

In response to feedback about time spent at screens and keeping up with remotely taught content, we have suspended the formal homework timetable during lockdown. Students may still be asked to complete work from lessons during the day, although we are trying to avoid this where possible. Staff should be setting optional extension or challenge work however, to ensure that students are still being stretched and challenged. Although we have added an option via Class Charts to call the work 'Blended Learning', there is no provision in Class Charts to remove the label of 'Homework'. Therefore, you may still see work appearing as Homework, even though it is not, because we're putting all lessons on both Class Charts and Teams Assignments at present.

Assessment and feedback:

Another clear message from both surveys, was the desire for students to receive more feedback about the work they are doing. Since the surveys closed, we have already held a staff training session via Teams, showcasing a range of additional methods that can be used to assess and feed back to students whilst teaching remotely and I know that staff have been trying these out already. We continue to track engagement, attendance and work

quality through a traffic light system on a 'student tracker' in school. This helps us evaluate, plan and support student progress and achievement whilst teaching remotely, as well as prioritise contacts home where there are issues or indeed, if we want to praise our students.

In terms of more formal assessment and feedback, we are continuing to follow as close to our usual arrangements as is practicable whilst teaching remotely. This means that all students should receive at least one 'recall' and one 'depth' assessment this term (January to April). We will use the findings of these to help us evaluate performance so far this year and which we will report to you in the usual way before the Easter Break. We will also continue to press ahead with any scheduled Parent Consultation Evenings that are in the calendar for this term, utilizing our online 'Parents Evening System' that has worked well so far. Of course, the usual procedures for contacting the school remain in place, so if you have a query or want feedback separate to those mentioned above, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

A summary of the other actions that we are taking in response to both formal and informal feedback can be found in Appendix A. These centre around ensuring we maintain the momentum that we've built so far and ensuring we offer the right balance of work and wellbeing support for all our students.

Thank you to all those people who completed the surveys. I hope that the steps we have taken in light of your feedback meet with your approval. Staff are certainly working flat-out to continue offering the most effective and high-quality remote education that we can and I would like to reiterate how much your support means to us. As I write, the earliest date for a return to school remains the 8th March 2021, and we will write to you with details about reopening in due course. If this date changes, we will of course write to you as soon as possible.

In the meantime, please look out for further communications about the 12th February and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any other queries. Please do keep yourselves and your family safe and well too.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hawthorne". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'H'.

Mr R Hawthorne
Head of School

APPENDIX A

Summary of findings and actions from Remote Learning Surveys – January 2021

Overview:

- Both surveys were issued on Friday 15th January 2021 with a closing date of 3pm Wednesday 20th January 2021
- The surveys were asked the same number of questions (11) although some questions differed slightly in emphasis
- Parents and students received notification of the surveys via a letter from the Head of School, notification on 'Weduc' and an announcement on Class Charts
- Number of responses:
 - Students: 98
 - Parents: 135
- This is a pleasing and relevant number of responses in a short window and at short notice
- There was a fairly even spread across all the year groups so the surveys can be considered representative
- A visual summary of responses is provided in Appendix A

Summary of questions:

| Student Survey | Parent Survey |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name (optional)2. Year group3. Proportion of lessons that have been live4. How school work is being accessed5. How much devices have to be shared in the household6. How straightforward live lessons have been to access7. Proportion of old and new content being covered in live lessons8. How helpful live lessons are9. How much work is being set and whether this is the right amount (both live and offline work)10. How challenging work set is and if this is right (both live and offline)11. How remote learning can be improved (multi-choice and option for 'other') | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name (optional)2. Year group of child/ren3. How school work is being accessed4. How much devices have to be shared in the household5. How straightforward live lessons have been to access6. How helpful live lessons are7. How clear instructions have been (for both live and offline work)8. How much work is being set and whether this is the right amount (live and offline)9. How challenging work set is and if this is right (both live and offline work)10. Response to requests for help (speed/helpfulness)11. How remote learning can be improved (multi-choice and option for 'other') |

- There were a total of 9 students who added additional comments to Q11 and 24 parents who did the same

Findings and commentary:

Having analyzed the information that came in through these surveys the following points summarize our findings:

- The survey yielded a positive picture of JOG remote provision overall
- Families who have access to devices seem to find live lessons helpful and easy to access. Students are receiving more than three quarters of their learning through live teaching and given the school's desire to balance screen time with provision carefully, this would seem about right
- Overall, instructions for lessons are seemingly clear enough for most to follow and, on the whole, it seems the school responds quickly and effectively when queries are raised
- Content and skills being covered provide a balance of recall and revision activities but there is also a decent amount of new skills and content being taught
- Work seems to be appropriately challenging for many students and where this is a mixed picture, it may be a reflection of the limitations of providing individual support through remote provision; it is inevitable that work will be easier for some than others and so on. However, as very few felt that the work is too easy or that too little work is being set it can be concluded that the level of challenge is, on balance about where it should be
- Students felt that they need either more time or less work in order to meet the demands of remote learning. Perhaps this point links to why more students felt that they'd like fewer live lessons than their parents did



- Neither group wanted more work to be set. Moreover, all the students who wrote comments under the 'other' section of question 11, stated that they felt that there was too much homework, especially given that they also had to catch up on unfinished work from during the day. Whilst few parent comments echoed the same sentiment, there were points from the parent group around the need for down time or 'free' lessons
- Both groups gave a very clear steer that they'd like more feedback on the work that is being completed
- Both parents and students felt that further clarity of instructions would be helpful; as would be improved consistency about where work could be found, with some commenting that the use of Teams Assignments and Class Charts caused some confusion.

Actions:

As a result of these findings, we will take the following steps to further improve our remote education provision:

1. We will share the findings and response to these surveys to all stakeholders
2. We will remind staff of the need to differentiate, scaffold and support students as best as they can in the current circumstances.
3. TAs will continue to join some live lessons and offer specific support where they can
4. Staff will be reminded of the need to respond quickly to queries and think carefully about the clarity of their instructions
5. Work will continue to be set on both Teams Assignments and Class Charts – this work should be a duplicate – but enables us to have a better overview of work being set. Both platforms have some benefits that the other one does not
6. Staff will be asked to ensure that they offer 2 formal assessments as per usual policy (one 'recall', one 'depth'), which should offer two formal opportunities for feedback to students
7. We will run CPD for staff on different ways that they can feed back remotely, both after assessments and during the course of everyday remote provision.
8. Using our remote 'School Cloud' system, we will continue to run Parents' Consultation Evenings as per the calendar.
9. Using our student trackers to monitor and evaluate engagement and work quality, we will continue to contact with families and offer praise and feedback.
10. Parents in all year groups will receive a progress report before the Easter break, although a little later than originally calendared
11. Tutor time will continue
12. Staff will be reminded about workload and screen time of students. Live lessons are already supposed to not be run for more than 45 minutes per lesson, to enable time for students to catch up and many teachers already build in some time for independent work during the lesson itself.
13. Formal Homework in all year groups will now be paused until further notice. In its place, students may be asked to finish off work from the lessons that day
14. Staff will be asked to ensure that voluntary 'extension' work is available for those students who feel they need to be stretched further.
15. Time will continue to be built into the timetable for downtime; for example, Core PE lessons and PSHE lessons are already given over to wellbeing time where students are encouraged to step away from screens where possible
16. We will provide a 'welfare day' for students on the 12th February. On this day, students will be set time to catch up on missed work/minimal offline work (no live lessons) to enable staff time to contact families and check on their welfare and gain/give feedback where necessary

