



4 February 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

### **Changes to our remote learning plans, “Screen Free Friday” and re-opening school update**

In my last letter to you I promised an update on some potential changes we are making to the timetabled school day for the remainder of the lockdown and school partial-closure period. Following the survey we commissioned with all of our stakeholders, it became very clear that a number of students and families were struggling with the amount of work being set (especially in the asynchronous lessons) and, for many students, the relentless screen time that remote learning demands. Parents requested more and longer breaks between lessons in order to support students’ resilience in their learning. As a result, we have adjusted the timings of lessons within the school day to 50 min lessons. From Monday 8 February, we will be using the following timings:

#### **MON-THURS**

	<b>50 min lessons</b>
Tutor	8.45-8.55am
Lesson 1	9.00-9.50am
Lesson 2	10.00-10.50am
Break	10.50-11.15am
Lesson 3	11.15-12.05pm
Lunch	12.05-1.00pm
Lesson 4	1.00-1.50pm
Lesson 5	2.00-2.50pm

#### **FRIDAY**

	<b>50 min lessons</b>
Tutor/PSMSC	8.45-9.20am
Lesson 1	9.30-10.20am
Break	10.20-10.40am
Lesson 2	10.40-11.30am
Lunch	11.30-12.30pm
Lesson 3	12.30-1.20pm
Lesson 4	1.30-2.20pm

We will continue to use the pattern of 50% “synchronous” (live) lessons and 50% “asynchronous” lessons (the plan for this is in our remote learning support webpages [here](#)). We will, however, now be asking students to submit the work that they have been asked to complete in the asynchronous (non-live) lessons **within a day of it being set** (rather than the current three day time expectation). This is because a number of students felt that the three day window was not particularly helpful in ensuring that work was completed and submitted on time. It was also adding further administrative burdens to teaching staff. Whilst asynchronous learning offers greater flexibility, we would expect that where possible, students try to complete the work in the timetabled slot for that lesson. The final tweak we want to make is that we will be notifying students of their work on Google classroom only rather than using Class Charts. We feel that students and parents are very clear where the work for any given lesson is to be found and that the Class Charts notification is, for now, unnecessary. We will of course resume Class Charts notifications for homework once we return to face-to-face learning.

### **Screen Free Friday**

In addition to this change, I would like to remind you that on Friday 12 February, we will be observing “Screen Free Friday”. Following the morning tutor session, students will be provided with a range of alternative learning activities that will give them a break from their normal curriculum and help them to consider their own welfare and wellbeing and, crucially, will not require them to use a computer screen. More information about the activities and structure of the day will be shared in the next few days. Screen Free Friday will be mirrored in school for our special provision students and the team are putting together a plan of activities. We will be surveying parents of special provision students to ask you to confirm if you still wish for your child to attend special provision on Friday 12 February.

### **Free school meals during the half-term holiday**

Students who normally receive free school meals are entitled to receive vouchers during the half term break as part of the government’s Covid winter grant scheme. The funding for this comes via Brighter Futures for Children. Vouchers for qualifying families will be provided through the same Edenred platform that is currently in operation. If you qualify and have already given your consent to upload your details, we will automatically apply for the voucher on your behalf. This includes those students currently attending special provision. If your child normally qualifies for free school meals and you have not yet provided consent to upload your details to Edenred, but would like us to, then please contact the school office by Tuesday 9 February.

### **Re-opening school**

The government has already said that schools will not be returning to full opening until Monday 8 March at the earliest. We will all be given at least two weeks’ notice of re-opening and so we will probably get an announcement on Monday 22 February (the first day back after the half-term break). As the lockdown seems to be having an impact in reducing all of the key indicators (new cases, hospital admissions, COVID related deaths) the government is becoming increasingly positive about the 8 March seeing some form of return to school and that is what we are planning for. The devil, as they say, is always in the detail and we do not know yet what form of re-opening the government will instruct us to implement. We are also not clear, at this stage, how the reopening of school will integrate with plans for mass testing of students using lateral flow tests. We await the clarification we need and meanwhile continue to prepare for a number of different scenarios. As ever, I will endeavour to keep you updated!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr A Johnson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Mr A Johnson**  
Headteacher