



Edwinstree Middle School
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

Student News

Dear Edwinstree Distance Learner

My goodness what a week! At the start of term we were busily planning to test Year 7 and 8 students for Covid-19 on their return to school, while planning online lessons for two weeks while we got everything ready. Whilst we were planning for Year 5 and 6 to return to school, we were also getting more and more worried. The Scientists were telling us it would be a mistake until they were clear what was happening with the new strand of Coronavirus. Next came the announcement from our Prime Minister that the country was going back into lockdown and schools would close and students return to online learning, What a shock, and what an eventful and historic week?

How are you doing? How did this make you feel? How are you coping with the start of online learning?

As we had very little time to plan for this change, we have returned to the online learning format that you are familiar with (unless Year 5) where we post your work up on *Show my Homework* on Monday morning and you can then decide when and how you are going to complete it. At the moment we don't restrict you to a timetable; you can decide when you want to complete each subject. It might be Maths Monday and Science Tuesday, English Wednesday or it can be that you decide to complete different lessons on different days. It is up to you and your family to sit down and talk about what you want to do.

Like before, we are clear your wellbeing and mental health is our first priority, so if you are really having a down day let your parents know, they and we will understand. When you feel calmer, we really want to encourage you to complete all your CORE learning, starting with Maths and then move on to your other subjects where possible. Nobody is going shout or punish you if you don't complete the work, but we will continue to encourage you complete it. Education and your learning is very important and we noticed that students who did commit to learning last time, moved forward and those that didn't went backwards. If you get stuck and or need help, don't worry. Use SMHW to let us know and we will comment back at the times published. We will understand and want to help you.

To be a successful online learner you need the following:

- A place you have agreed to work and a plan that you have discussed with your family how and when you will complete the work for the week.
- A clear set of times that your parents have agreed that they can support you if you are finding it difficult.
- The confidence to comment to your teacher if you are struggling and to not get stressed and move onto something else.
- The commitment that this is important, this is your learning and the work you put in is an investment in you and will help you in your future.
- The understanding that you read the guides we publish for the lesson. This is our teacher voice that is helping you to understand what you need to do. If you don't read this carefully you won't know what to do. It would be like sticking fingers in your ears so you can't hear what the teacher is saying in the classroom.

*As a Christian school we recognise the unique and wonderful in everyone.
As a community we support one another to flourish and live life in all its fullness.*

How are we going to improve our online learning?

- We are encouraging staff to use small bite size videos to introduce topics and explain what you have to do. They will also use them to model what they expect from you and what your learning should look like. You told us last time that this was something you really liked. If they are using video in the title of the work that pings through to you on SMHW, we will flag up there is a video with the words VIDEO in bold!
- If you were a Year 7 or Year 8 student in school in ICT lessons in December you were taught how to use an online Microsoft programme TEAMS. This is the method we will use to connect to you LIVE and to talk and teach if we are completing a LIVE lesson. We will place LIVE in the title of the work we set. We will begin to trial how to do this next week and there are around 8 teachers across all years who are eager to do this. You will see in the title of their lesson the WORD LIVE showing that the teacher is going attempt to start the lesson and setting you off, or teaching you a scientific experiment etc and/ or specific skills. More information will come out next week about how to access this and what to do.
- If you are Year 5 and Year 6, we will train you on this through your online distance learning ICT lessons. It is really important you do this to use this facility for your LIVE lessons, COWOs and be able talk to teachers about your learning worries, rather than just commenting on SMHW.

How will we support your wellbeing and help you to stay well?

- We will again publish where you can go to get help and a flow chart of where you can find them, either in school or externally. But for the moment, if you are feeling down please remember strong people talk, they don't hide it and sometimes they do cry, so let your parents know. They can then contact your Head of Year or the Learning Zone and someone can speak to you. We hope that soon this could be through face to face TEAMS sessions.
- We will publish a wellbeing AM session on SMHW at the start of the week, to help you maintain your wellbeing. Mr Galanides will also post on the SMHW noticeboard giving you advice on how to manage your wellbeing with meditation and reflection.
- If you want to stay connected with us you might like to join our LIVE COWOs which we are trialling with classes this week and next and hope to have out to you all very soon.
- Teachers will trial using TEAMS as their method of contacting you, so you can meet LIVE and face to face via TEAMS to discuss what you are struggling with and get help. Mrs Booth and Mrs Mayne are going to try this next week.
- Remember, if you are not working, it feels ok at first but your guilt and worry builds up and eventually you feel terrible, so to help improve your wellbeing and your future, do get learning but remember, if you can't do it that's ok, let the teacher know the problem.

We miss you all ready, but hope to connect with you all via TEAMS very soon. Once again our face to face online journey will be bumpy; you have seen how long it has taken me to get used to remote COWOs via TEAMS, but we will get there. We hope by seeing us make mistakes, it will remind you that this is how we learn too. It is ok to make mistakes as long as we learn from them!

Stay safe

Mrs Gant
Headteacher