

5th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you of our initial thoughts regarding online learning for the next six weeks and to manage your initial expectations of us as a school. I would like to explain that like you, this news has come as a shock and like all schools, we have had no time to plan for this extended online learning. I would like to reassure you that our guiding principles, however we adapt and improve our online learning, will be based on supporting the wellbeing of our community. We will ensure that our students receive appropriate, differentiated and planned work that follows the 'schemes of work' and supports them to move forward over the next few weeks. Whether in or out of school, all students will be following the same curriculum and lessons.

In order to look at how we support online learning, we are considering the following questions:

Can we move to "live" lessons at the same time as students' current timetable? The answer is no and the reasons are listed below:

- Capacity is the key reason why this is not possible. Staff are now required to write and set lessons for all the classes that they would normally teach in school, as well as having to teach 50% of a normal timetable for our key workers in school.
- The school has re-timetabled for the key workers and vulnerables. The idea that a teacher is available for an online child at the time they would have taught in school is not correct as many staff will be teaching in school.
- In addition to planning lessons, responding to students online, teaching an additional 50% timetable, our staff also are required to produce hard copy for those students unable to access online. This involves choosing different resources and for many families requiring support and with Government help, we may be able solve their ICT resource problem, but unfortunately, we do not have the capacity to solve the problem of no internet or ability to pay for internet at home, therefore, the need for hard copy further increases staff workload.

What is the simplest form of online learning in the first instance?

- The majority of students, unless Year 5, spent almost a term (Y6 and Y7) and a whole term (Y7) learning online during lockdown. This method of online learning was recognised by County as a model of good practice. Therefore, in the first instance we have returned to the method we have previously used which is familiar.

What will online learning involve in its simplest form? (Year 5 Parents may not know this)

- Learning that is tracked to in school learning and follows our 'schemes of work' and curriculum plan for this term.
- A guide sheet is written to guide students through their lesson and provides the teacher voice that they would normally hear in the classroom. It is essential that students follow this guide.
- Differentiated resources to support lower, middle and higher ability students.
- An opportunity to comment and ask the teacher questions and an allocated time when they will be able to respond
- An opportunity to complete work and return to the teacher using the SMHW tools.

Norfolk Road : Buntingford : Hertfordshire : SG9 9AW

T: 01763 -271446 F: 01763-274005 E: admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk W: www.edwinstree.herts.sch.uk



How do we improve our online learning service?

- As published in the Newsletter before Christmas and the letters Parentmailed during the holidays, we will be trialling a few live lessons/opportunities asap. They are likely to involve SLT and one or two more experienced teachers.
- In the meantime, we are actively encouraging our staff to use the Edwinstree private you tube account to include video material, to set up a lesson and or explain difficult concepts. Your feedback informed us that videos students could play back again and again was really effective.
- In order to introduce live lessons, all students will require access to Microsoft Teams, therefore, we will need to issue your child's email address to you (they have already been allocated). We are required to use TEAMS as this is the recommended platform for safeguarding purposes by HCC.

What can I do as a Parent to support my child during this period of online learning?

- Agree a work space, work times and when and if they can seek your support
- Use the video to help understand SMHW. https://youtu.be/RTcDUrMb_8 contact r.heywood@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk if you need help or advice
- Encourage your child to engage with the teacher through the commentary on SMHW.
- Support your child to upload work and return to the teacher for assessment.
- Set a realistic expectation of what they can achieve, prioritise the CORE subjects Maths first.
- Remember, there is no evidence that a live lesson provides quality learning, talking at students may keep them quiet for a while, but there is limited evidence it has impact.
- Take time to review the guides that we provide students for lessons, they are of a very high standard and if you encourage your child to engage, they will continue to learn.
- Recognise that online learning is more successful with your support.

What about *Show my Homework* [SMHW] crashing today? Will this happen often?

At the start of lockdown in March 2020, the national SMHW site crashed due to over use. The firm quickly resolved the problem and we had a very smooth and well-functioning site. I understand the same thing has happened today and the company have assured us they are fixing the problem and we trust this will be rectified.

Please be assured that we will continue to do our best for all our students and we thank you for your continued support during these challenging times, it is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Jo Gant
Headteacher