

15th January 2021

Dear parents and carers

Fairfield Live! Update 1

Thank you all very much for your tremendous support to us in getting the online learning up and running this week. I am conscious that there was a great deal of paperwork to read through and that especially for our new parents and carers, the whole thing has taken a bit of getting used to! I am also sorry that the mix up with codes earlier in the week affected some younger students' experiences. However, I am delighted that over 98% of students have attended online lessons this week and have been working hard at home completing the assignments set by staff.

We have planned to teach half of the normal timetabled lessons and to set independent work for the other half of the time. The main reasons for this are:

- To make the timetable manageable for families who have more than one child at home being taught remotely and a finite number of devices
- To allow children time to develop their own independent learning skills
- To acknowledge the fact that parents and carers have other responsibilities eg working from home or caring roles for other members of the family
- To recognise that online lessons can be intense and demanding in terms of focus and concentration and to give children a chance to work at their own pace for some of the time
- To allow staff to prepare lessons and assignments and to give regular feedback to students; staff are also contacting students to follow up work and wellbeing

Some of you have already given us some helpful feedback with a few concerns about the volume of work expected; we are mindful of the DfE expectation that secondary children should work for about five hours per day with a mixture of online lessons and work set. We wanted to deliver lessons from our own staff rather than the 'off the shelf' lessons available online recommended by the DfE. If you would like to supplement what we are doing you might like to find a lesson on the same topic on the BBC online lessons or from the Oak Academy materials. Most of the feedback so far suggests that students have enough to do; we would also encourage daily reading for everyone as a great way to escape lockdown and hone a vital skill at the same time!

We have created a special area on our website for anything to do with lockdown/Covid etc. The online timetables and letters etc are all here. We have a skeleton staff in school – mostly SLT and some admin staff – so please check the website before calling us. The admin emails are monitored several times a day so are the quickest means of communication for most things. Please check your email regularly as we will send out information by email as much as possible – we can do it quickly and easily even in the evenings or at

weekends. We are still gathering information and working on plans for the testing required by the government, so will send out information when it is ready. Similarly we are waiting for the consultation regarding exams and will write home once we have concrete information rather than conjecture.

School is open at the normal time every day and we have had a few key worker children in school this week – thank you for using this facility sparingly, which helps to keep us all safe. Exercise books can be collected from the front hallway in school if needed and we still have a few laptops we can lend to students. If we have bad weather in the coming weeks which prevents school from opening, we will put information on our website and use the Herefordshire Council School Closure notification as well; we will also do our best to email as early as possible – hopefully this won't be needed!

Best wishes

Sue Gaston.

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