



Icknield Community College

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14 April 2020

Dear Parents

As promised, I am writing to update you on what we are planning for your child's next phase of learning.

Before I do so, please may I reiterate some key messages from my letter of 3 April:

“This is not education as we have known it.”

We all believe that students have a fundamental entitlement to education, but, at the moment, this will certainly look different from school to school across the country. This is not a time to compare schools, all of whom will be taking the approach that they think is right for their own contexts and settings. Please trust us, as professionals, to take the best approach for your child, giving them the best possible education in the given circumstances.

In the next phase of learning, we need to get our students learning new material. We don't think we will have time to teach all of the material that would have been delivered during the period of school closure at a later date. Whilst we will need to revisit this material in some way when school opens again, this is likely to be in a limited way so students will need to have a good go at learning this at home. We recognise that this will provide some challenges for parents, but we believe it is in the students' best interests for us to take this approach.

To help maximise the amount of time we have to deliver the Year 10 curriculum, we have made the decision to reduce the Year 10 exam period from two weeks to one week. The majority of students will be completing about 15-20 hours of exams and we believe this is achievable in one week, particularly if it facilitates an additional week's learning. On that note, whilst it is disappointing that students will not be able to do their Year 10 Work Experience as planned, this week will be “gained time” in terms of curriculum. Equally, whether we are back at school or not from 15 – 26 June, these two weeks, in which students would have been sitting their Year 10 exams, will also now be available for the taught curriculum.

Given the above, your child's next phase of learning will begin on Monday 18 May. In this phase, the teacher will have a much more central role in the students' learning. Individual teachers of classes (rather than Heads of Department who have been setting exam revision work) will set work on a weekly basis and students will be asked to submit work to these teachers more frequently. They will not be asked to submit work from all tasks set, but rather ones requested by their teachers.

Teachers will review work submitted and will offer some form of feedback. Clearly, we are not able to provide verbal feedback to students, as is the most common form in the normal school day. The feedback may be general to the whole class or, less frequently, to students individually.

Some of the work set might involve teachers recording videos with voice-overs commenting on documents that could be seen on screens. This might be, for example, an exemplar piece of work, an explanation of a diagram or a teacher talking through a set of learning objectives for a piece of work. Please see an example of such a video from Dr Legg.

<https://youtu.be/2Rfwwl6x9wY>

Teachers will share learning objectives with students each week so that they understand what they are trying to achieve, how it fits into the subject as a whole and, in line with our Attitude to Learning work, so that they can self-assess the progress they are making.

In the first instance, we will communicate with students through **Show My Homework** and their school **email**. Please can you make sure that, from Monday 18th May, your child is regularly checking their school email. They do this by logging on to RM Unify.

In this new world of virtual schooling, we are currently exploring how we can fully utilise and capitalise on the facilities offered by systems with which our students and staff are already familiar. We are also exploring the use of Microsoft Teams as a means of communication between teachers and students to enable greater collaboration between teachers and students and between the students themselves.

We are working with our subject leaders, currently, to evaluate the full range of online resources that exist, both those which are free, and those in which we would need to invest resource. We are also waiting to see what may be launched nationally – e.g. BBC Bitesize Daily Online Lessons which begin on Monday 20 April. It is easy to signpost students to online learning; it is more challenging to signpost them to what we consider to be the best online learning for them. This online learning will form part of the curriculum package that individual teachers will be putting together.

Students won't be able to learn in exactly the same way they would have done at school. This is for a variety of reasons, not least specialist staff, accommodation and resources.

Your child will be set work for all of their GCSE subjects. As per my previous email, please don't worry if you are struggling to get them through all of this. Learning at home in isolation is very different to learning in a school setting! We know you will be doing your best to ensure your child can study as much as is possible in the current circumstances.

As we've mentioned in previous correspondence, there are clearly other activities we would encourage you to undertake with your children. We certainly advocate students doing an hour of exercise every day to keep physically and mentally fit; our PE team will be sharing activities and ideas to support this. We encourage students to develop employability skills using, for example, the Be Ready programme (they need to check their emails to sign in to this) and to develop their careers education on an ongoing basis (please see the "10 Ways to Develop Careers Education at Home" attachments to this letter). Simply reading for at least 30 minutes every day will only benefit your child too!

We will be in touch again with more information in the new term. In the meantime, I hope your child's revision programme is going well and I wish them all the best for their exam week starting on Monday 11 May.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mat Hunter
Headteacher