



## Horsforth School

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Headteacher: Dr P C Bell

Our Ref: PCB/TRH

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your family are well and had a great Christmas and New Year. In a week where it feels like the world is going a little bit mad with the US situation, a national lockdown and schools shutting to all but Key Worker and vulnerable families I would like to reassure you that the school is still running albeit mostly remotely and that eventually all this will pass.

As we are now in a National Lockdown all students are learning remotely. We are still open for children of Key Workers and vulnerable families and they are completing the same work (remote lessons with a live element) in school.

### **Remote learning**

We have now done a full week of live remote learning and we have received lots of positive feedback from both pupils and parents. If there are any issues with accessing remote learning please email [remotelearning@horsforthschool.org](mailto:remotelearning@horsforthschool.org) All lessons should have a live element (explanation, Q&A, feedback etc.) unless the teacher is ill or unable to get online. Please ensure your son/daughter is aware of our remote learning expectations:

- Your child is in an appropriate and neutral space such as a dining table, desk, sofa, kitchen table. Your child should not be in bed
- That there is nothing inappropriate or offensive in the background.
- Remind your child to not share personal information whilst on line.
- Try to ensure the space is quiet and that other children are not seen in the background.
- Your child should be appropriately dressed and ready to learn, with full equipment at hand.
- Your child must follow the same rules and etiquette as we would expect in a classroom.
- Ground rules may be given at the start of each lesson and these must be followed. Students may ask staff appropriate questions when prompted.
- Students who behave poorly during a live lesson will be subject to the same sanctions in line with school policy on their return.
- Do not allow anyone into the Google Meet who doesn't have a Horsforth School account.

### **Behaviour and etiquette for remote learning**

I am so very pleased to say that the vast majority of our students have behaved impeccably during this first week of live lessons. Students will still be accumulating their daily rewards credits for attendance at all of their lessons and teachers can still award bonus credits to those students who bring their personal best to their remote learning. We hope this encourages our students during these difficult times.

To support our students with our expectations, Form Tutors reminded all students about these at the start of this week.

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Students were informed that all staff will still be using the 'Positive Behaviour' policy and procedures to reward good behaviour or report any deliberate disruption or misdemeanours.

Whilst I do not foresee poor behaviour being an issue, I think it is important to make all parents aware, if only for reassurance, that we will not tolerate poor behaviour during live lessons just as we don't whilst on the school site. For that reason any high level behaviours during live lessons will be recorded and we will sanction students on their return to school. Of course, we will always inform parents and carers if we need to do this.

### **Attendance at remote lessons**

This week we have been trialing a new system to record accurate attendance at all of our remote lessons and we hope to have this up and fully running by Monday 11th.

This means that pastoral staff may be contacting you where there is a cause for concern with absence from lessons.

Please also continue to call school in the morning if your child is ill and not going to attend the live lessons. That way we have a more accurate record for our attendance registers and also so we do not cause offence by calling home when a child is unwell.

### **Safeguarding during the remote learning period**

Safeguarding our students remains a top priority for this period.

We have delivered an online safety assembly with two short films to support this via Form Time this week and will continue to use Form Time to deliver essential messages to our young people. Please could we remind parents to be vigilant with their child's phone use at this time. Phones will be used more than ever during lockdown and it is important that parents can access what their child is using, reading and/or sharing. We do encourage parents to know the passwords for their child's phone and check it from time to time.

All staff will be vigilant during the remote lessons and will report any cause for concerns to the safeguarding team and child protection team immediately.

There is a member of the safeguarding team on school site everyday and so if parents or carers have any concerns they can call the main school on 0113 2265454 and ask to speak with a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **Pastoral Care**

Students will see their Form Tutor 3 times a week for a live form time. Form Tutors will complete welfare checks and ask students if they want an individual chat. Pastoral Officers will also be calling home and emailing individual students for more in-depth welfare checks for selected students. If you would like the pastoral officer to do this with your child please contact [pastoralhub@horsforthschool.org](mailto:pastoralhub@horsforthschool.org)

Further information about supporting your child's mental health will be emailed separately in due course.

### **Exams in 2021**

We have written to all parents and students in Years 11 and 13 regarding the announcement on Wednesday. We have no details regarding how grades will be awarded, whether linked to previous assessments, coursework or alternative assessments but as soon as we have certainty over what this means we will let you know. The Government is launching a two week consultation next week over how to award grades so we will know the details at some point after that.

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I would strongly encourage all Year 11 and 13 students to continue attending all remote learning as this will prepare them for any possible assessments, continue to build their knowledge and expertise and prepare them to be able to move on to their next steps.

Students who wish to come to our Sixth Form must continue with 100% effort so they will be ready to start the A Level content.

### **Progress Review and reports**

Our latest Progress Review, giving students information about their current progress and Attitude to Learning (ATL), was due to take place next week. Unfortunately, due to the current situation, we are having to delay this process; we will update you fully when we have a new timescale in place. As the January Progress Review also links to school reports, the reports for Years 8 and 9 will be published later in the year than advertised currently on the school calendar.

### **Lateral Flow (rapid) testing**

We are working hard at setting up our rapid testing system. The tests are simple to perform (I have already done it as a test), give results in 20-30 minutes, have 99.8% specificity (this indicates how many false positives can happen) and use a system that is similar to the 'Clear Blue' pregnancy tests.

We aim to begin piloting these with staff this week and these tests are only for staff and students who **show no symptoms** (anyone with symptoms must isolate and get a PCR test). As a third of people who have COVID show no symptoms and the younger you are the less likely you are to have symptoms detecting these cases will be vital going forward.

They are different to the PCR tests that take 24 hours and are usually conducted at drive throughs as these tests detect fragments of the viruses genetic material whilst the lateral flow tests detect the spikes on the surface of the virus. I have been assured these tests still detect the new variant of COVID.

This means that the rapid tests, from the information the NHS has given me, are less sensitive than the PCR tests. The numbers I have been given are that the rapid tests are about 77% as sensitive as the PCR tests.

No member of staff or student would be required to take the test and we would ask for full consent.

I hope that by training staff, preparing our site and getting efficient and reliable processes ready now we will make our current provision as safe as possible and be ready when we are able to open again.

### **Free School Meals**

Support will be provided for the students eligible for Free School Meals whilst they are working remotely. We are currently waiting for clarification from the Government as to how this will be delivered.

### **Laptops**

As always, the fantastic Horsforth community has shown its generosity and support for each other by donating old laptops to school which we can use to support families who may be struggling with a lack of devices in their home. If you have an old device which is collecting dust and you wish to donate to school these can be dropped off at the main school reception.

Thank you for your emails of support and particularly how much better remote learning is this time. Staff are working hard to make lessons as interactive as purposeful as possible and it has been wonderful to be able to pass on your feedback to them.

I know this is a tremendously challenging time for everyone. If we, as a school can help please let us know.

Yours faithfully

*'Opportunity and achievement for all'*

Dr P Bell  
Headteacher

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