

Dear Parent / Carer

We are now a week and a half into lockdown and I am sure that you are wrestling, as we are, with the problems of remote learning. Please rest assured that the teachers of Arthur Mellows continue to be at the cutting edge of providing high quality, remote learning for all students under their care. I feel as Headteacher that it is important to reflect that the 5 hour direction from Government lacks any understanding of the pressure that places young people such as your child under, on a daily basis.

We as a College are constantly monitoring what we are doing in this important area and will be making alterations as we perceive problems or improvements require. Early indications list the following observations:

- Too much screen time can be detrimental to student wellbeing and it is important that as a parent you feel able to decide the amount of input your child receives going forward.
- Structuring the day such that students have time for relaxation is perfectly acceptable and should be encouraged.
- We have instructed staff to try and avoid back to back lessons, stopping and starting with no break so hopefully there will be a 5-10 minute comfort break for both students and staff.
- Remote learning according to studies, is best done as a blended mixture of live lessons and distance learning, accessed from various online platforms / hard copy resources.
- The aim of remote learning is to keep students in touch with the education process not put them 'over the edge' in terms of stress and pressure. It is perfectly reasonable for you, as a parent, to step in at any point and encourage 'down time' rather than attend yet another live lesson / complete an independent task on SharePoint.
- Some live lessons will move from direct teaching to being a more tutorial help session on previous work set for students to drop-in if they are struggling. We are trialling this format to see if it helps with student wellbeing and will be part of the allocation of lessons going forward.
- Students have been unclear as to the status of certain pieces of work, as to whether they will be assessed and feedback provided. At this stage, we are considering what is feasible and reasonable in terms of the work set for students and what they can expect back and will provide more information going forward. I can confirm that we will identify work which will be assessed by setting it using Microsoft Teams Assignments with the title headed 'ASSESSMENT' to allow you to prioritise this piece over other work.

My aim with this communication is to offer control back to you as a parent / carer and encourage you to monitor your child and not push them through a system where 'one size fits all'. I think we can all recognise that this is not going to change back to face to face lessons quickly and it is important that wellbeing is put at the forefront. The staff of Arthur Mellows will continue to provide high quality education through the remote learning format but families must be able to engage to the level they are able, given the circumstances that we all find ourselves in.

The College will be carrying out a survey on our remote learning provision, with parents and students over the next couple of weeks, which I would encourage you to take part in as it will enable us to adapt our processes to further meet the needs of all students.

Thank you for your continued support.

M Sandeman

Head of College