

Dear parents and carers,

Somehow, we have already reached the end of our fourth week of lockdown and school closure. It is strange that, in many ways, this way of working is beginning to feel 'normal', yet in others it still feels utterly, utterly strange. It is nice seeing the small handful of Year 8 students that are on-site but I am missing seeing all of the usual faces and our normal interactions.

You will have begun receiving an email update reporting on the percentage of assignments completed. Just to clarify this, this is an indicator (albeit quite a blunt one) of engagement and currently the best measure we are able to generate from Microsoft Teams information. It measures solely the number of assignments that have been "Turned In" on the system, so is a very broad proxy for engagement - it does not reflect work set on other platforms, such as MathsWatch or Seneca, nor does it try to offer a commentary on the quality of work set. Teachers will contact you with any direct concerns about quality or quantity of work if they have any, but the percentage report can be a useful conversation starter with students especially if low. Overall, though, we are pleased with the levels of engagement that Year 8s are showing.

While we continue to believe, as a school, that live lessons are generally the best form of lesson delivery during lockdown, we are also conscious of the impact this can have on students in terms of screen-time and subsequent impacts on ocular health, posture, etc. Our stance at the moment is that students should be able to complete the work set in lessons during the lesson time - they should not need to spend hours in the evenings or at the weekends also completing this work. Teachers should not be setting "homework" (the term is kind of meaningless at the moment!) in addition to lesson work, so in theory children's school-based screen-time should be entirely limited to between 9 and 3:15, with the usual breaks in between. If you have any concerns in this respect, please pop an email to me or Emma and we can investigate further.

Finally, during these really difficult times, we know that there are lots of parents and carers whose circumstances have changed dramatically. If you have found that you are suddenly, or currently, in need of financial support then please do remember that you may be eligible to apply for Free School Meals (FSM) for your child. Not only will this ensure that they receive a meal each day in school, but also means that the school receives a small extra pot of money ("pupil premium") that can be directly used to support your child with resources, equipment, trips (when they start happening again!), and so on. You can apply for this directly through the council website by [clicking here](#).

Many thanks and we'll update again soon.

Aaron Phillips & Emma Terry
Assistant Principal & Progress Leader for Year 8

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Principal: David James **Vice Principals:** Andrew Fisher Katherine Patterson Gary Wakefield

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