



7 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to thank you for your support and positivity in the way we have worked together over the last 24 days of home learning and 49 days of lockdown since 20th March.

It has been both a challenging and rewarding time for us all in some ways. We have seen students engage positively with their work, completing tasks and assessments. They have kept in touch with their learning and sourced support when they needed it. I am very proud of them and their staff in how they have responded and worked hard to make the best of this situation. Some have found it straight forward; others have found the technology or the adjustment of conditions more challenging. Everyone has shown great resilience and mostly kept their sense of humour and politeness throughout!

I am very grateful for the feedback given via the survey we have been running for the last two weeks. This confirms to us what our anecdotal information had suggested. By far the majority of students are using their iPad to complete work, although some are using a home PC. Over 80% are working for 3-5 hours a day or less, which hopefully is leaving time for other activities to help their well-being.

- 82% of respondents said they thought their son/daughter was coping well with home learning
- 85% said of respondents said that they were coping well as parents.
- 75% of the respondents believe the amount of work being set is “about right”

Of the remaining, a very balanced split shows similar proportions experienced the amount as too much or too little. This confirms that the experiences are very personal and what is right for one family may not be right for another.

It has been important that our pastoral teams have been in touch and contacting students every week, working with families where there are difficulties to support, offer solutions or simply remove stresses. Therefore, I am pleased that 91% of respondents said that teachers had been supportive in their approach to home learning.

Examples of what people had experienced that they valued included:

- Selected web-links to help support work
- Teachers demonstrating work or explaining the task “in person”
- Setting the work for the week and giving time and space to complete work, flexibility.
- Using Firefly as the one central location and portal
- Clear guidance, simple PowerPoints, simple steps to follow.
- Quick and clear response from teachers.



Understandably we have all had to adjust to remote learning at the same time as people are working from home and not all Wi-Fi's have been robust at the start, remembering passwords can be a challenge. Hopefully itsupport@heathfieldcc.co.uk have managed to help most, we know they have been working flat out to support staff and students with various iPad, app and password dilemmas.

And all of that is before we factor in siblings, lack of friends, the need for adults to be able to carry out their own work or students' motivational levels and anxiety at this strange time. There is strong argument we will all have done well simply to come through this with our well-being and sense of humour intact. I hope we have tried to communicate that we understand, that with good communication we will work hard to help and overcome most issues and that we are always able to adjust to individual needs where we know and are able to act.

There are some simple truths that resound throughout this period and are evident in the feedback:

- Routines of work help and are good for mental well being
- Exercise and/or relaxation strategies are important
- Time with family is important but so too is staying in touch with friends on line
- Communication is vital: keeping it calm, clear and simple so we all understand we each other and we try not to let the frustrations of the situation affect our mutual support.

We do understand it's hard at times. It is so reassuring to know that the vast majority of families understand we are reaching out, maintaining learning and support and doing our level best to ensure nobody is left too far behind or is struggling without help. Thank you for that support and appreciation, it makes a huge difference to staff who are working hard at home and balancing the very same issues.

We know Sunday will bring an announcement from government but none of us knows what shape that will take. Whilst we have embarked on preliminary planning we have no detailed logistical arrangements yet to understand what a lifting of restrictions would mean we are able to do or not do. We are not able to do that until we have the fine detail.


Please be assured, I have discussed this at length with senior colleagues and governors. We want to see our students, but more than that we want them and their families to be safe. We will not embark on anything in haste that has not been fully planned or does not prioritise the safety of students and their families. Once we know what the announcement contains we will be better placed to inform you of our next steps.

In the meantime, I know many of you are planning a VE Bank Holiday weekend. We would love to see and share photos of what you are up to if you are willing for us to do so. Please email us or Tweet us your tea parties, bunting or singing as we mark an extraordinary day in an extraordinary time for us all.

Thank you again, well done to all our students whether you feel like it or not you are doing a great job. We will keep doing what we are doing and finding different ways to improve your experience. Until "we meet again" have a lovely weekend and stay safe.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher