

## Remote Message from the Principal 1

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear all,

Firstly, apologies for sending this email into your evening; as you can imagine there has been a huge amount to organise today after the PM's announcement last night. Whilst, in some senses, we were already ready for today – as both the Primary and Secondary phases had moved to remote learning this week – the news last night has changed things for us all, and so I thank you for your patience as the day has progressed.

I am going to focus mainly on key information in this first message; on Friday – when I resume my weekly messages to you all – I will reflect more on the situation. But I do want to send my best wishes to everyone in the CFS community. If you are anything like me, you may well still be feeling a little numb after last night's announcement. I am not ashamed to say that I took a sharp intake of breath when it was announced that schools would go to remote learning to at least February half term. During this pandemic we have always talked about the varying emotions and responses in society, and within our own community, but I am currently feeling such a range of very different emotions all on my own. And I am sure you are too. I told all staff today to take a deep breath, be kind to themselves, and remember we are embarking on a new marathon – when we perhaps haven't completely recovered from the last one – not a sprint. My thoughts are with all of you worried about work, childcare, health and loved ones. As a school, we will do everything in our power to ease the burden over the next few weeks. We won't always get everything right – the rule book still hasn't been written for these situations – but we will definitely do our best. More on Friday, but for now... please look after yourselves and say a warm hello to the pupils from me; I cannot wait to welcome them back into school!

Now, for the key information as promised:

### Remote Learning

I apologise again for the issues with Satchel One/SMHW today – this was a platform issue which we are hoping has been resolved nationally. If you have any issues with logging on, please contact Mrs Hall on [ahall@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:ahall@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk).

Satchel 1 have launched a new Live Discussion feature. Homework Discussion facilitates conversation between pupils and teachers around assignments that have been set - this feature allows pupils to support one another and sparks conversation around tasks outside of class. The pupil support link can be found at <https://help.satchelone.com/en/articles/4585383-homework-discussion-for-students>

We had already planned to action a 'Scenario 2' approach over the next two weeks for Years R-11, and have decided to continue with this even though we are now in a full lockdown. However, as outlined below, there are a couple of caveats on the live feedback, due to staff sometimes being needed in school in the key worker provision.

The key thing is, that this approach allows all pupils to follow a very structured timetable each day and get immediate feedback via Satchel One at the times outlined, where at possible. However, where it is not possible for pupils to work at these exact times – as we know that there may be limitations at home – the work is still available for a couple of days to give you and your child some flexibility.

New legislation is now in place which ensures that we – as we did in the first lockdown – carefully monitor engagement and completion of work and we will contact parents when several pieces of work have not been completed. But we will, of course, be respectful of people's circumstances at home, different abilities and situations; where we do chase work it

will be because we are genuinely concerned but please do keep in touch with your child's tutor or class teacher and we will work together to ensure that pupils continue to progress academically over the next half term, without any unnecessary pressure or worry for you or your child.

We are currently organising ICT support for those that need it, and the SEND team are working hard to provide differentiated work and, where appropriate, bespoke timetables for some pupils.

On Friday, I will send a revised list of extra resources you can also access, on top of the work provided by the CFS team.

We will also be issuing weekly assemblies as before, for both phases of the School.

### **Primary Plan:**

We will be setting pre-recorded lessons; these will be in a video format and will be delivered by your child's class teacher. At several points during each video lesson, your child will be asked to complete a task, just as they would in school. These will be indicated by a phrase like 'now pause the video and complete the task, when you have finished carry on watching the lesson', at these points the video will need to be paused and the work on the screen completed. If your child is unsure about something, this means they can easily rewind the lesson and watch a section again. These lessons will be pre-recorded and uploaded on a daily basis to SMHW. This means that a pupil can access the learning from home on the day it is intended but, in any order, and at any time. Your child's class teacher will also be available for any additional support and feedback using SMHW as a feedback and chat platform. This will not be a live lesson, as the lesson will already have been provided as a video, but as a means of supporting any children who may need help and as a platform for feedback at the following times:

- 9.30am – 10.15am: Maths support and feedback
- 11.00am – 11.45am: English support and feedback
- 1pm-2pm: Topic support and feedback

Please be aware that sometimes the feedback will be provided by the other year group class teacher.

### **Secondary Plan:**

We will be setting pre-recorded lessons in line with your child's daily timetable (a reminder that we have started the term on **week 2**); often these will be in a video format and will be delivered by your child's teacher. If your child is unsure about something, this means they can easily rewind the lesson and watch a section again. They can also pause the tuition to complete a task. These lessons will be pre-recorded and uploaded on a daily basis to SMHW, at least by the time of the normal lesson but often earlier. Whilst we recommend, where possible, that pupils try to keep to their normal timetable times – to aid with structure and to ensure they keep on top of the work – we do understand that this is not always possible at home. This method means that, where it is needed, there is some flexibility for pupils. Your child's class teacher will also be available for any additional support and feedback using SMHW/ Satchel One as a feedback and chat platform. This will not be a live lesson as the lesson will already have been provided, but as a means of supporting any children who may need help and as a platform for feedback. Teachers will be available for this instant feedback during your child's normal timetabled lesson. If staff are unavailable at this time, they will arrange a separate time – clearly communicated on the Satchel One entry – or another subject specialist will provide feedback instead.

To confirm, Year 13 will continue with the live lessons which were already set up this week – more for this year group below.

## Keeping in Contact

As well as maintaining the academic element of school, it is more important than ever that we continue to support our pupils on an emotional and pastoral level. Class teachers, and tutors will be making regular contact with all pupils, and the pastoral and SEND teams will be checking in with various pupils. Heads of Year are also making regular contact with the Secondary year groups. We are also looking at more formal ways of 'touching base' in a more personal way than just through the remote learning programme – please bear with us as we get this sorted. In the meantime, and at all times during this lockdown, do not hesitate to contact the School if your child is struggling – academically or emotionally – and needs some extra support. The best person to contact initially is your child's tutor or class teacher, but please reach out to anyone that you feel comfortable communicating with.

## Childcare Provision – for Children of Key Workers and Invited Pupils

Thank you to all of you who booked your child in - with so little notice – for today, and have then emailed by 3pm today for the rest of the week. The provision started off well today, but we are close to capacity with the staffing availability we have. Going forward, we are going to take each week at a time, as staffing availability may change over time as may your childcare need – as is the nature of this pandemic. We therefore would ask that, even if you have indicated a long term need to us already (which is very useful for planning) that we need you to request spaces each week separately in the booking windows outlined below. We will then confirm to you if your child has a place – which will always be our utmost intention – on the day stated. As many other schools have, it may be that we have to action a Key Worker priority list if we exceed capacity, but we are being as creative as possible to not have to do this:

### **For childcare needs week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> January:**

Booking window – Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January (deadline Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 9am)

Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January

### **For childcare needs week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> January:**

Booking window – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January (deadline 3pm on Wednesday)

Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January

### **For childcare needs week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> January:**

Booking window – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January (deadline 3pm on Wednesday)

Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January

### **For childcare needs week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> February:**

Booking window – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January to Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January (deadline 3pm on Wednesday)

Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 28<sup>st</sup> January

### **For childcare needs week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> February:**

Booking window – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January to Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February (deadline 3pm on Wednesday)

Confirmation of place emails issued – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February

All bookings must be sent to [paprincipal@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:paprincipal@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk), with proof of key worker status if you have not already provided this.

There are two key changes to the provision going forward;

- **All pupils need to bring a packed lunch every day (using the issued vouchers for those who have free school meals).**
- **The Secondary provision, from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, will finish at 3.30pm for all.**

### **Years 11 and 13**

As well as the lockdown itself, one of the most significant announcements last night for young people was of course the cancellation of a second year of GCSE and A Level exams. I remember standing in front of the former Year 11 and 13s last March, trying to articulate what had happened to them at that point. A second time around, it is no easier to try and explain this situation. My heart breaks for all the young people who have had the rug pulled from them a second time, but there is also a sense of relief that there will now be increased fairness across the country as, the more self-isolation periods were being initiated, the more the playing field was becoming very uneven.

I genuinely have no answers at the moment – even the exam boards only heard the news as we all did last night and have been very honest with us today that they do not know how things will work. But there is little doubt that centre assessed grades will be used again and so, the most important thing that Year 11 and 13 can do now is **keep going**. We are going to need as much evidence as possible to support centre assessed grades, and it could be that we are required to conduct national internal exams at some point. At the moment we simply do not know, but that means that **it is absolutely vital that these year groups keep on top of their remote learning and do not give up**.

I am so sorry I cannot give you anything more definite at the moment, but I promise I will as soon as we know anymore. I am extremely conscious of how Year 11 and 13 may be feeling right now – everything from relief, to loss, to anger, to feeling let down. Mr Angell and Mrs Tulley will be sending video messages out to both year groups tomorrow to offer some support. And please encourage your children to reach out to their tutors and teachers over the coming weeks.

### **Free School Meals**

If your child is eligible for free school meals we will be issuing vouchers. Please bear with us this week as it is taking a couple of days to process all of this, but vouchers will be with you as soon as possible.

### **Year 9 Guided Choices**

One of the key things we need to complete this half term is the Year 9 GCSE guided choices selection, and lockdown makes this no less important. More information to follow, but here are the key dates for your diary:

21<sup>st</sup> Jan

- Guided Choices eBooklet issued to parents/pupils.

- Guided Choices virtual assembly/parents information video goes live.

28<sup>th</sup> Jan

- Virtual PPC and Guided choices evening (you will be able to book appointments with subjects not available at KS3)

29<sup>th</sup> Jan

- SIMS online goes live to allow choices to be confirmed digitally

11<sup>th</sup> Feb

- Deadline for completion of Guided choices via SIMS Online.

Following this, any pupils who we are unable to offer their first choices will be contacted and offered their reserve subjects or alternatives offered if the reserve is also not possible.

### **Online Safety**

With pupils spending more time than ever online, it seems a pertinent time to resend the Online Safety information – which is attached to this email.

### **CCF Cadets**

Mr Cook will be uploading some prerecorded lessons relating to the cadet syllabus each Friday (starting 15.01.21). These are not compulsory but recommended and will give your cadet some great background knowledge ready to put into practice upon return to face to face training. There will be content for our Senior Year 11 Cadets, our Year 10s and our new Year 8 recruits. If you have any queries about any of this, please contact Mr Cook at [rcook@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:rcook@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk).

I will be in touch again on Friday.

With very best wishes; stay safe,

**Mrs Louise New**

**Principal**