

January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

We thought it would be helpful to write to all parents/carers across all the schools within the MAT to explain our approach to remote learning and to give an update on some of the developments you will see over the coming few weeks.

Firstly, we want to thank all of our families for their continued support during what has been a most difficult start to the term, as we have all tried to keep up with the decisions made nationally that have affected our schools and the young people we serve. We will continue to communicate with updates on all issues as we gain clarity, including on exams and the process for awarding grades this summer. We know that this is a matter of significant concern for those affected.

We have based our remote learning approach on the limited amount of good practice and research that has been published on the matter. You can find more details about some of these publications (including the recent brief OFSTED publication on remote learning) on the MAT website in a document entitled [Principles for Remote Learning](#). Each school will follow these principles but will establish individual protocols and routines to secure effective provision in line with the guidance from the Department for Education.

There is a common theme in all we have read and heard; the quality of materials is far more important than the methodology of delivery. All of our teachers across the MAT are working to produce lessons each day for students with appropriate explanations and practice activities which subsequently culminate in assignments for submission and feedback. This will, wherever possible, replicate the curriculum that would have been covered in lessons in school.

We believe that the cornerstone of the effective teaching of new content remotely is asynchronous learning (i.e. recorded videos or voiced-over PowerPoint slides). Students can continue to access these resources over a period of time, pause and revisit content and not worry if technology momentarily fails or is unavailable for whatever reason during periods of the day.

You will be aware, of course, that we originally envisaged this term's remote learning being limited to a short period at the beginning of January before a phased return for all students. As we now contemplate a much longer period of time, we do believe there is a place for a variety approaches to supplement this offer.

We know that students value contact with both their teachers and other students and need support in developing a strong, daily learning routine. Therefore, we are looking to increase the opportunities for 'live' interaction over coming weeks. However, we do not believe that 5 hours of 'live lessons' a day and the associated uninterrupted screen time is sustainable or healthy for students and staff nor, for that matter, that this is the best way to teach a knowledge rich curriculum in the current circumstances. We believe that 'live lessons' are most suited to smaller groups where dialogue is key (e.g. feedback sessions).

We are committed to continuing to develop our approach in schools and across the MAT, learning from each other and from other institutions. We know that remote learning requires an even greater partnership with parents/carers in order to bring about success. Therefore, in order to keep you up-to-date with the additions we introduce over coming weeks, we have asked all of our schools to produce a remote learning family bulletin each week. This will let you know what to expect in terms of the provision and any changes we make, as well as provide you with tips and advice as to how you can support young people at home.

Please do not hesitate to contact colleagues in your son/daughter's school if you require assistance with any aspect of remote learning.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Pollard

Deputy Chief Executive Officer