

Dear Parents and carers,

As we reach the end of the first school week in 2021 I wanted to say thank you for your support as we adjust again; we have particularly appreciated some of the very kind messages that we have received this week. The transition to remote learning has been much smoother this time and we've hopefully learnt a lot from our experiences in the spring and summer of 2020. There has been lots of communication home this week as we try to react to the news shared by the government, whether it is about lateral flow testing in schools or changes to assessments for year 11 and 13 in the summer.

As there were so many documents shared at the start of the week I have attached to this email the expectations for remote learning for students and also the information about accessing Office 365 and using Microsoft Teams so that information about remote learning is in one place. Thank you for your patience with staff as we become more familiar with these approaches to teaching. It is clear that many students have appreciated being able to have some consistency and continuity through hearing a familiar teachers voice in a Microsoft Teams meeting. For some families it may be difficult to find enough devices to access multiple Teams meetings at once. You may be aware of some guidance that has been shared on the internet about using an X box or Playstation to access Microsoft Office. A member of our Learning Technologies group has tested this out for us and some guidance on how to do this is attached also.

We would appreciate your support in encouraging students to communicate with their teachers. If students are unable to attend a Teams meeting, or to complete a piece of work, please could they let the member of staff setting the work or organising the meeting know this and the reason why. It helps our staff to support students further if we have this information. Students can message staff using the comment box on any assignment or classwork task on Show My Homework.

SMHW is an incredibly useful communication tool and has allowed us to maintain continuity through using a platform which students are familiar with. One aspect which can be frustrating are the notifications on a mobile phone when work is set. It is possible to turn these notifications off and guidance on how to do this can be found in the following user guide: [Managing email and push notifications | Satchel Help Center \(satchelone.com\)](#)

We have chosen to use a range of approaches to teaching remotely and staff have commented how useful it is for students to work independently and check progress in different ways. When staff are unable to see students it can feel as if some students are very passive while a Teams meeting is taking place, and using Microsoft Forms, Quizlet and other approaches is incredibly valuable.

Thank you again for your support.

Kind regards, Catharine Forster, Deputy Headteacher and Remote Learning Lead