



# SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

7 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, **Happy New Year** and thank you all for the lovely messages of support and thanks we have received over the past few days. Your kind words are very much welcomed and appreciated, at what is a very difficult and challenging time for all of us.

I waited for the latest government announcement yesterday before sending this letter, in case there was anything specific which we needed to communicate. There is more information on the cancellation of Year 11 exams later in the letter. At present we only know what was shared in the press and media and no further direct communication to school has been forthcoming.

## Remote/Online Learning

We have rolled out a hybrid mix of remote and online learning including pre-recorded video lessons (by our own staff), live zoom subject surgeries and other online resources such as Google Classroom. They have been happening extensively throughout the last few days and we are already hearing some excellent reports on their effectiveness. We need to spread the word that students should actively log on and participate in these via the Satchel One app. Our aim with remote learning, is to provide a far more blended personalised approach which we know our students will appreciate. The feedback to date already shows this. Thank you to the parents who have contacted us in appreciation of what all the staff are doing at present.

All student should follow their normal timetable and log into Satchel One at the start of each day. School runs a daily report to see which students have accessed their learning and this information is consolidated by attendees at the live zoom seminars. We have simplified the timings of the day by removing the 'virtual' split lunch. Therefore, the structure will be Period 1 (8.45 – 9.35), Period 2 (9.35 – 10.25), Form Time/Break Time (10.25 – 11.00), Period 3 (11.00 – 11.50), Period 4 (11.50 – 12.40), Lunch (12.40 – 13.10), Period 5 (13.10 – 14.00) and Period 6 (14.00 – 14.50). This is to simplify the times of our live zoom surgeries and enable families to eat together at lunchtime if they wish.

We want to ensure that students have access to their teachers in a way that is purposeful and specific to their needs. Experience has demonstrated that whole class live learning does not necessarily provide this specific interaction. Our live subject surgeries enable students to ask questions, check their understanding, revisit the lesson materials and receive reassurance and support directly with their teacher. This exceeds what can be offered in a 'whole class' situation and is much closer to the type of individualised feedback and support we aim to provide for students under normal circumstances.

There will be regular assessment points, as there would be in any normal classroom environment over a number of lessons. Students should submit their work and it will be marked as usual. They will then receive feedback. We are aware that there have been some national issues with Satchel One, but these now seem to have been rectified.

## Regular Contact

All students will receive a regular phone call home to check on their welfare. We have made several hundred calls already this week and again, are appreciative of the supportive comments from both students and parents. Please use these calls to raise any concerns and we will ensure they are addressed as soon as possible.

## Parents' Evenings

Online parents' evenings will continue as already planned throughout the course of the year. Dates will be circulated in due course along with the appointment booking system.

## Key Worker/Vulnerable Students

The school will only be open to provide education for the children of keyworkers (who have no alternative arrangements) and vulnerable children. If your child falls into a specific 'vulnerable' group we will contact you directly to ask if you would like them to attend school.

If you are a keyworker who is working from home, or if you have alternative childcare available – such as a childcare bubble – you should keep your child away from school in accordance with the clear government guidance issued on Monday evening. The school is open **only** for the children of keyworkers **who have to attend work and have no alternative arrangements**. Please note that the government guidance is clearly – **STAY AT HOME, PROTECT THE NHS, SAVE LIVES**.

If, having considered the government guidance, as a keyworker, you **genuinely** need to send your child to school we may once again need you to provide proof of your keyworker status.

**FOR KEY WORKER PARENTS ONLY**

**To aid our staffing rotas, places must be booked a week IN ADVANCE, if this is required.**

**Bookings should be made by Thursday 4pm of each week for the following week.**

If you meet the 'key worker' definition and need this childcare support please email directly to Keeley Stone via [kstone@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:kstone@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk)

with your child's name, date of birth and year group, along with your job title and employer.

**Please indicate your need for all days in the week individually.**

Please put 'KEY WORKERS CHILDCARE' in the subject line. Emails to other addresses will not be monitored.

**Covid Testing in Schools**

We have now rolled out Covid testing and completed 69 tests on key worker students and staff so far. We are delighted to confirm that all tests undertaken to date are negative. The programme will continue to be rolled out for anyone in the building over the next few weeks. A mass testing programme will then be planned for when all other students return to school.

**Staff Contact**

I am asking staff to ensure that they maintain a sensible work life balance during this time. **As a result, please do not expect any responses to school emails/messages on Satchel One between the hours of 6pm and 8am during the week. Staff will respond as soon as they are able. There is a separate Covid email address which SHOULD be used to report cases. Please see the information later in this letter.**

**Year 11**

The government guidance on teacher assessments in place of examinations is still to be received. We are only aware of exactly the same information as was shared in the press and media earlier this week. We will certainly look to calendar a second round of internal exams later in the year. This means that students still have the opportunity to work towards formal assessment points alongside teacher assessments. At present, the government have given us no indication, whatsoever, of the process but I assure you that we will work as hard as we can to ensure that students get the grades they rightfully deserve.

**Notifying the School of positive Covid test results**

If your child receives a positive Covid test result at any time then please let us know immediately, using the email address [covid@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:covid@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk)

If you do have to notify the school of a positive test result, we need to have a series of questions answered. These will include the date your child was last in school, the date the test was taken, the first date that your child experienced Covid, any other positive cases or symptoms in the household and any contact with other families or individuals. This information will be sent to Public Health England.

I recognise that these are very difficult times for all of us and our own families and children. None of this situation is of our making and it is so important that we work together to find a way through until life returns to some form of normality.

Thank you for your continued support and please stay safe!

Yours sincerely

**Martyn Palfreyman**  
**Headteacher**