



# SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

## **PARENT/CARER UPDATE – YEARS 7, 8 and 9 – 1 JUNE 2020**

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you well and that your family and friends are all healthy and safe. I would like to thank you for staying in touch with us, emailing and communicating with the staff over the last few weeks. Your support and feedback has been tremendous and has helped us to refine our remote provision for our students. Your genuine concern and lovely comments are important to the staff as we try to do our best in the current situation.

It has been pleasing to see so many students actively engaging in the work set, ensuring that knowledge and understanding of their studied subjects is being maintained in this extraordinary time. On an average day we have over 650 students logged onto our systems/platforms. I would like to thank you also for supporting this and helping your child through what I am sure have been some difficult times. It is this partnership between school and home which makes the difference to all our young people's lives. So, a big thank you to all of you in helping us to ensure that your child keeps learning, albeit in a very different way. We are aware that not all students will be able to stick to a rigid plan and many will struggle with the resources and home environment conducive to this.

You will be aware that the government has announced its plans to begin to move the country out of the lockdown. This staged approach will have already seen many people preparing for return to work, whilst some have been advised by the NHS to remain at home to look after themselves or vulnerable members of their family. Part of this staged response has been the announcement that students who have examinations in the next academic year are expected to have more contact with school for 'face to face' support of their remote learning. For us, this affects our current Year 10 students. We are slightly ahead of the game as we had already planned this from 1 June (in line with the original date) and all of our Year 10 students will have a face to face video conference call over the next two weeks.

This announcement, therefore, makes it clear that we will not see the return of students currently in years 7, 8 or 9 before the end of this term. We are very disappointed that we won't see the students before the Autumn term at the earliest or yourselves at the many school events we had planned for this term. We currently have no idea how school in September is likely to operate, but we will obviously keep you updated as guidance becomes available. You have my categorical assurance that we will do all we can to support every single student to ensure that they still achieve to the best of their ability as they move forward through the school.

Students working from home will continue to receive home learning tasks up until the end of the school year in July. It is important that students continue to complete the work set so they are not missing out on learning. Gaps in learning during these years will adversely affect future work and we continue to need your support to avoid this from developing in your child's learning. Our planned home learning tasks will ensure National Curriculum coverage is continued in these extraordinary times. Our intention for home learning remains the same – we will continue to set work on SMHW, maintaining student's knowledge and skills, as well as providing them with a sense of normality during this unsettling time.

We are aware through phone calls home and via email that many students are struggling to finish all of the work set and in order for students not to feel overwhelmed, we have constructed an alternative timetable which we will use to set work from 1 June 2020. Our focus now shifts from quantity to quality with less subjects but slightly longer activities for each day. Please see the attached document. In addition, we are now increasing the number of 'required submission' tasks where we expect students to submit their work back to the teacher. This allows staff to monitor how students are progressing. This approach should allow students and parents to complete a 'to do list' of tasks which need to be completed by the end of the day or week, rather than the rigidity of time stamped lessons. This will provide some control over what they do and when, and that element of choice should continue to motivate them.



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It is vitally important that required work is submitted by the given date and this will be clearly shown on SMHW. Any queries or comments can be sent directly to teachers via the SMHW comments portal. Staff will be more than happy to help all students. In addition, we will be reviewing our pastoral arrangements to ensure further contact over the next half term.

It is important that students factor in breaks, such as doing something else for 15 minutes before they move onto the next subject. We are acutely aware that work at home does take significantly longer than under the guidance of a teacher in school, but if your child would like extra work above and beyond what is set, there are also many very useful online resources that your child can access such as:

BBC Bitesize Daily lessons <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons>

The Oak National Academy <https://www.thenational.academy/>

and, of course, Joe Wicks exercise <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

In addition to this, we would recommend at least 2 hours extra reading per week.

We have had a handful of parents ask about 'live' lessons and if this is something the school would consider. Although it may be possible to make a success of video conferencing in which the teacher delivers a 'live' interactive lesson, it is very hard to get this right. There are also clear online safety and safeguarding issues to consider. There are a small number of other schools who have trialled online lessons, with mixed results. Many say there are times where students have failed to log on at the correct time or there are ongoing technical issues. Therefore, staff in those schools are typically producing lesson content which is being missed by many students, which is becoming even more frustrating for them and compounds the problem of work missed and students being disadvantaged. I also have to be mindful that many of our staff have small children themselves and are trying to supervise them whilst setting work for our students. However, pre-recorded video and PowerPoint narration can be used effectively to deliver teacher explanations. We already have several staff who are using this approach. The videos are made available for students to watch at a time suitable to them.

We have issued a significant number of school laptops to families with no ICT access and following a survey of over 800 students, many said they are using phones and iPads. This is far from ideal, but cannot be rectified quickly. The government scheme to provide laptops and broadband to disadvantaged students has not yet come to fruition, but if you know that your child is struggling with ICT access, please let us know and we will see what we can do to support.

I would like to stress again that students will not get into trouble if they are struggling with or are unable to complete home learning. We understand that there may be many challenges to completing work each day. All we ask is that students do the best they can and keep in touch with us so that we can help in any way that we can. The 'comments' function on Show My homework is an effective method of doing this. We would like to thank our students for the resilience that they have shown over the last 2 months, and you for your support and encouragement.

We still live in unprecedented and concerning times. Scientists are still saying that they cannot be confident that the rate of infection will be decreasing to manageable levels on a local basis, testing and tracing capacity will be in hand, and adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of the virus. Please continue to ensure your children are meeting the lockdown requirements, not gathering in groups and protecting both themselves and the reputation of the school in the local community.

Your support with all we are endeavouring to do is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

**Martyn Palfreyman**  
Headteacher



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## YEAR 7, 8 and 9 REMOTE LEARNING TIMETABLE – EFFECTIVE 1 JUNE 2020

### YEAR 7

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
English	Science	English	Maths	English
History	Maths	Maths	MFL	Science
MFL	Geography	DT	Global or Religious Studies	Music or Drama
Computer Science or Art		PE		

### YEAR 8

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
English	English	History	English	Geography
Maths	Science	Maths	Science	Maths
DT	MFL	MFL option	MFL	Music or Drama
Art or Computer Science		PE		Religious Studies or Global

### YEAR 9

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Science	English	English	Maths	English
Maths	History	Geography	MFL	Ma
Option A (Check timetable)	Option B (Check timetable)	PE	Option C (Check timetable)	Science
Global				