

West Monmouth School

Ysgol Gorllewin Mynwy



Believe Achieve Succeed CREDU Cyflawni Llwyddo

WMS - a caring School

Headteacher/Prifathrawes: Emma Jordan B.A., P.G.C.E., MA(Ed), N.P.Q.H.

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

As you are all aware, we find ourselves back into an extended lockdown situation. In light of this, we want to be to ensure that the pupils of West Monmouth School can continue to learn effectively.

We have taken the time to review our approach to remote learning and the below outlines some key changes which we think will improve our offer. We thank you for your ongoing support, for any feedback you have provided and we really appreciated the kind words we read about our online learning efforts on the school Facebook page. Needless to say, this has been an extremely challenging time for all. We are continuing to learn about how to deliver remote learning effectively, and we remain absolutely committed to ensuring our pupils get the best education possible.

We recognise that these circumstances are incredibly difficult and there are many challenges in pupils accessing and participating in home learning. In general, parental feedback has suggested that some pupils are anxious about how long to spend on tasks – sometimes spending far longer than the allocated time available, which has presented difficulties for pupils keeping on top of their assignments. In addition, there are concerns about the amount of screen time. Therefore, we will endeavour to streamline the work pupils receive and to reassure parents and pupils that we understand if pupils cannot meet every deadline. In order to help pupils and parents prioritise, we are asking each subject to:

- Schedule live lessons for the week ahead by 8am on Monday morning.
- Ensure that work being set is realistic for pupils to complete within the lesson timeframe. Where appropriate, teachers will provide extension tasks for pupils who complete early.

We ask pupils to prioritise the following:

- **Live lessons and the assignments which relate to these lessons.**

What is staying the same?

1. **Pupils continue to follow their timetable.** *It is an established & familiar routine and will hopefully support a sense of structure for pupils working from home.*
2. **There will be at least 1 live lesson per subject, per week** *(excluding creative subjects, pse and health and well-being at KS3)*

What is changing?

1. **The timetable for live lessons will be scheduled by 8am Monday morning for that week.** *This gives parents and pupils, who may be sharing devices, an opportunity to plan for the week and support parents to monitor what their child is doing. The timetable can be viewed in the Microsoft Teams' calendar (see tutorial video for help finding this).*

2. **At KS3, creative subjects, PSE and health and wellbeing subjects will take the form of project based activities.** *Online learning is not the same as learning in school. We believe that too much screen time could have negative impacts on our pupils' wellbeing. Supplementing online learning with high quality enrichment activities which may be practical and active will help promote better health and wellbeing. We also recognise that pupils may be sharing devices and/or need breaks in their learning.*
3. **Faculties may enrich live lesson content with supplementary activities that offer a wider variety of tasks.** *For example, documentaries and films to watch, project based learning, active learning, competitions etc. Once again we are seeking to reduce pressure on pupils and parents, reduce screen time and help facilitate device sharing.*
4. **Weekly tutor sessions with form tutors on Microsoft Teams.** *These are an opportunity for pupils to check in with form tutors and their peers and for the school to check pupil welfare.*
5. **Notifications from school regarding pupil engagement.** *These will be coordinated by Heads of Learning to ensure that parents are not overwhelmed with notifications. However, we feel it is important that parents are kept aware if their child is meeting deadlines or otherwise and these are also an opportunity for parents to seek support from the school, if appropriate.*

What are we trying to do more of?

1. **Encourage pupil participation in live lessons** – *online teaching is challenging and very different from face to face. It can be hard to see who is concentrating or maybe struggling. Encouraging cameras to be switched on where appropriate using break-out rooms where appropriate and supporting pupils to become more confident to speak in online classes are areas for development. Video conferencing is commonplace in many jobs and as such it is a great opportunity to develop confidence in this skill.*
2. **Supporting pupils to work independently.** *Providing pupils with strategies to support them to work independently. For example,*
 - *Being explicit about how long you expect them to work on an assignment,*
 - *Explicitly telling pupils where and how to get help if they get stuck*
 - *Providing checklists of what needs to be completed.*
3. **Continue to learn about the challenges that pupils and parents are facing during these uncertain times and adapting teaching accordingly.**

Fundamentally we recognise that times are difficult. We are determined to support our pupils and parents and we encourage you to continue to provide feedback to us – both things that are working well, as well as areas for development. Full details on how to do this can be found on our remote learning FAQs, on the school website.

Best wishes,

Rhys Hopkins (Assistant Head teacher – teaching and learning)