



BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

Guidance for Parents on Remote Learning

Welcome to Beeston virtual school - this world has been much discussed but it is fair to say that very few (apart from, arguably, Bill Gates, in his April 2015 TED Talk) (<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=bill+gates+ted+talk+vaccines&view=detail&mid=38D2CE486E45C4E48DED38D2CE486E45C4E48DED&FORM=VIRE>) saw it advancing and springing forth on the world so forcibly. Notwithstanding, while we will not achieve perfection, we are ready and will be delivering as closely as we can all the academic, pastoral, cultural and physical aspects of Beeston, remotely. Please do 'work with us' too, since the change, as well as the reliance on technology, will present barriers, on occasions. My first principle, though, is communication, and our common aim to keep in close touch, much as the close relationships that are built at Beeston and so valued.

All parents should have had their guides to the Google Classroom, as the children have, in anticipation of next week. Children have already been beavering away, completing assignments and – as in the digital world – taking to this altered reality with aplomb and success. As is so often the case, the 'getting to know' is pretty intuitive and best delivered through routine and repetition.

It should be fun, but as you might expect, we have been sifting the huge amount of advice and feedback from many sources (much from international schools in the Far East) to try and distill technical reassurance, ensuring pupil, parent and staff wellbeing, as well as the appropriate safeguarding measures, over and above our existing policies (safeguarding, e-safety, health and safety) which are on the Beeston website, and in respect of the school's GDPR obligations. So, to be brief:

Lessons will happen according to the already posted timetables. These may be amended after Easter – this week is something of a trial run.

Children will register with tutors each morning from 8.15am to 8.30am and in each lesson. This can be done using Google Stream or, in due course, through Google Hangouts.

It is a happy coincidence that the children have had recent e-safety guidance and are conversant with Google Classroom, as well as the several other applications available to them.

As everyone gains confidence the use of Google Hangouts (Meet+) will increase. Since all the children's school emails are linked to Google Classroom, the software we have opted for is Google Hangouts – secured and tested by Adam Davies. We will be consistent in using only this platform.

Please note virtual HM assembly on Monday at 4pm and virtual Prize-giving at 2.30pm on Thursday.

Safeguarding and remote learning

With the nature of streaming live video from teacher to pupil, we want to ensure that certain safeguarding measures are put in place by both the teacher and the parents, for everyone's protection. We have said to teachers:

- The teacher should liaise, in advance, directly with the parent to set up the web chat link – not with the child.
- Parents should remain in the room, or very much around, as possible, during the web chat.
- Children engage in web chat only while in a public living space (kitchen, sitting room...) – not a bedroom, or where they are isolated.
- The children are properly dressed for the day – not in pyjamas, or a state of dishevelment.
- Teachers can advise children that they can conference with audio only, or video, also.
- Messaging requires the proper use of grammar and punctuation.
- Chats should be assumed to be between the pupil and teacher, unless all pupils are instructed to collaborate on a particular task and it becomes a group.
- Private conversations and messaging should not be carried out using school-provided application logins.
- Consider that all chat functions are like emails - considered accessible by the school.
- Staff have a right and responsibility to 'switch off' any inappropriate behaviour or language from a child in any online circumstance.
- If in a 1:1 online lesson with video-enabled, teachers MUST record the communication – this is an option in the call menu. Staff are advised to also use the 'Blur my background' feature and encourage pupils to do the same.
- Obviously, all of the above apply to teachers as well.

Observations made about remote learning draw one towards the following observations and advices to parents:

Things take longer online; as is so often the case, hours can be hoovered up in front of the screen and we must all be wary of setting expectations too high for ourselves or our teachers;

May we all not overload one another or demand the instant response/feedback from teachers that web-based communication tends to promote;

Variable internet connections can make lessons more difficult. We will try to keep the language and instruction simple to minimise this.

I flag these potential frustrations because, in a time when anxiety is already high, they can quickly obscure the feeling of excitement and triumph that, I hope, will come as part of this experience. Further to my letter on Saturday, I accept that this may be a tense time for some families, too, and therefore am at pains to encourage us all to be forgiving of one another when things do not go so smoothly. Like Aristotle and David Hume, we must acknowledge the importance of feeling; it is this – how they felt - that the children will remember (more than a verb conjugation) when they think back on COVID-19 and what is likely to be the biggest shared 'event' in all of our lives.