



BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

6th January 2021

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year. I hope you have had lovely Christmas break and the children are feeling recharged and keen to get back to school, albeit remotely. I am sending home the Spring Remote Learning timetable with this letter and I hope you are pleased with the balance of academic vs enrichment, screen vs off screen provision. As the Headmaster has already conveyed, we are sticking to the principles of the first lockdown, providing a structured programme of learning for your child, whilst recognising that as a family you will want us to be flexible about how you manage your child's learning at home.

The day starts with the children logging onto their registration classrooms from 8.15am. They will have the opportunity to have free chat with their classmates before the registration teacher will take the register at 8.30am. Once the register has been taken, there is time, in the usual way, for quiet reading time before the children's first lesson.

At 9.00am there will be two 45-minute lessons with a 15-minute screen break in between. This is followed by a 30-minute break at 10.45am. During this time, we would encourage the children to keep up their regular music practices they play an instrument. After 11.15am there is a further 45-minute lesson.

The 2-hour lunch time is designed to allow you as a family to exploit the daylight hours and have an active time. There are numerous physical challenges being placed in the Google Classroom and we are encouraging the children to be good citizens at home and earn rewards for their efforts. We want the children to be refreshed for the next lesson at 2pm, so please encourage them away from the screens.

At 2pm there is a further 45-minute lesson, followed by the final session of the day which will be either a teacher-led session or an independent enquiry session. The 3pm Enquiry session will be informed by a weekly mailshot, which will communicate a weekly theme with lots of associated activities to engage and stimulate the children. Mentors will use one of these sessions to talk with the children about what they have done during this time and reward any particularly outstanding work or research.

The day ends with a short slot at 4pm, with either an assembly on Monday and Thursday which can be located in the Whole School Google Classroom, or a catch up with mentors to see how children are faring and discuss the day.

To provide something different, we are laying on several virtual activities which will run from 4.30pm to 5.15pm. These are optional and should be used with consideration of how tired the children become. A mailshot of activities on offer will follow shortly and children can try different activities on different weeks, so no sign up is required.

It is important at the weekend that the children have a break from the norm of screen-based activities and unwind a little, however, I know some children will be working hard to prepare for approaching assessments for senior schools. All in moderation, I would say. It has been a while since we were in extended lockdown so we must remember that remote learning is surprisingly challenging and tiring.

Online etiquette for lessons remains true, with children respecting the need to follow instructions of when to talk and how to ask and answer questions. Children should arrive to lessons appropriately dressed, ideally in uniform so their minds are in the right gear and finally on time – rewards available for this. Can you please ensure meal times and snack times are between lessons, so this does not distract productivity and focus.

A final safeguarding reminder with my other hat on. Please contact us, if your child or indeed you as parents, need support. We will endeavour to help in any way that we can to get through this time. We are amidst engaging a school counsellor but there great support groups we can point you towards if you need to talk to someone independent.

Also, where children are engaging in one-to-one activities with either a peri music teacher or one of our support team, please ensure that a trusted adult is in earshot of the session. As a rule, we have advised all our teachers to record live lessons on to our school server, for quality assurance and safeguarding purposes. These recordings will not be published without the permission of the children's parents.

Finally, we have a couple of staff who are absent at present as they are unwell. We would appreciate it that when staff are unwell live lessons will not take place and alternative activities will be provided. Mrs Fijalkowska has a hand injury and is not feeling 100% but is going to endeavour to attend all lessons live, but she is currently not able to type. We hope she will be back to full fitness for next week.

Mrs Casey had a concussion in December and is still suffering with the effects of that, particularly working on screens. We have planned alternative arrangements for Music. For Year 5 and below, there are independent music activities for the children on Google Classroom. For Year 6 and 7, Mr King will use the time for extra Geography, and Year 8 will be doing Theatre Studies with Mr Lloyd-Peck. Year 6 to 8 will need to go to those teachers' Google Classrooms.

We trust we can revert to a normal programme thereafter. In the meantime, I wish you a stimulating and engaging half term. Good luck!

Best wishes,

Paul Leaver

Deputy Head Academic