17 April 2020

Dear Parent or Carer,

Update on Distance Learning

I hope this finds you and your family well and that you have managed to have some sort of break over Easter, albeit in very different circumstances than we all would have planned.

Before updating you on distance learning, thank you so much for the amazing support you are showing to your young people and the College during this time.

It's been great to see so many examples of people pulling together over the past weeks; families supporting each other with home learning; our staff volunteers who kept the school open to key worker children throughout Easter, our pastoral colleagues ringing around families and students to check on wellbeing, and our amazing Technology department, who are now able to produce over 100 face shields every day for local health and care workers.

Although the situation is so worrying and serious for everyone, it is a great example of what we can achieve working together.

Distance Learning

Firstly, we recognise that distance learning will be challenging at times for our students, for parents and carers trying to support them, and for our staff as we adapt to new ways of working.

If students or parents and carers are struggling with home learning or anxious about not being able to complete work, please be reassured we will do everything we can to support you. Equally, we know and understand that for some families this is a very stressful time and home learning may not always be top of your agenda. Our message is, do what you can manage, and we will support you to the very best of our abilities.

In this new situation we welcome any feedback you have about distance learning. Please do email either myself or Ben Cotton to let us know what is working well and what we could do better - our addresses are asalt@kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk and bcotton@kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk.

Here's a summary of key points around our approach to distance learning, and thank you to parents, carers and students for your feedback so far!

- Our staff remain committed to updating work for every class **on a weekly basis**.

- We want to **recognise student efforts** in their home learning as we would in school. Staff are awarding classcharts points as usual to recognise the efforts students are making, as we know this will be important in reinforcing the hard work students are putting in.

- We want to be able to **give feedback to students** on work they have done. This is why we are moving over the next 2 weeks to ensure all learning is set on **Google Classroom**. Many of our students are already accessing this platform, and it makes it easier for students to ask questions and teachers for teachers to give feedback. Whilst we cannot physically mark work at this time, we are committed to making sure that students get appropriate feedback on their learning.

- Part of Google Classroom is the ability to hold **live video conferencing** between students and staff via **Google Meets**. We will not expect all students and staff to access this facility, but it gives us the chance to enhance student learning and understanding by hosting for example feedback sessions on work set as well as question and answer sessions. For ease of organisation, we will ask teachers setting google meets to do so using one of the time slots when their usual lesson would be happening. All dates and times for Google Meet sessions will be posted in advance on subject Google Classrooms

- We have of course looked very carefully at safeguarding and have a clear protocol for staff who will share expectations with students at the start of every session. Staff will be able to start **Google Meets from Monday 20th April**.

Thank you again for your support and understanding during this time, and please remember to contact us if you have queries, questions or suggestions.

With very best wishes,

Alan Salt
Principal