



Bideford College

Part of the Launceston College Multi Academy Trust

13 January 2021

Dear parents and carers,

I find myself writing to you in what are again unfortunate, though this time, not unprecedented circumstances. My purpose is to let the parents and carers of all Bideford College students better understand the nature of the remote learning we are offering during the period that the lockdown extends for.

ClassCharts

For the majority of students our online learning has commenced today. Staff are using ClassCharts to notify students of work that is being set. By placing it on this platform it allows you to also see the tasks set. This can be done through the college homework calendar that can be found on our website [here](#). It can also be seen in a view that is customised to your child's classes by using the parent app. This can be downloaded for free. A link to this is [here](#) and, if necessary, reception or your child's tutor can reissue you with the access code to set-up the parent account.

Google Classroom

We will use a second platform – Google Classroom – to support the delivery of lesson material. This will be where we attach resources or send students links to other online material. It is also the place where teachers will post instructional videos, be able to directly message students 'live' during lessons and also convene 'live' learning. The latter will use a Google Meeting code, unique to the class. Log-ins for Google Classroom (and ClassCharts) are students' usual college log-ins. These have not been reset since last Spring in most cases, but if students have forgotten these please ask them to email their tutor in the first instance. All teachers' email addresses can be found [here](#) and a series of help videos for using Google Classroom are [here](#).

Lesson times and format

Remote Learning will match students' regular timetables. I have emailed all students yesterday to remind them to get into the habit of checking their lessons for the day on ClassCharts and then going across to Google Classroom. As such, for years 7-11 the first of the lesson of the day will begin at 9am. Students should then follow their timetable for the day and ClassCharts will told them what they will need to do.

It will usually be the case that the lesson will begin with 10-15 minutes of live or recorded video content produced by the class teacher. Often students will then be asked to engage independently with follow-up tasks or other resources for the remainder of the lesson. During this time the teacher will be 'live' online and available to the group so that they can be ask questions or ask for feedback should they need to. This can be done by directly messaging them through Google Classroom. The lessons will match the expectations of a normal lessons in terms of the volume of work we ask students to cover. I will separately attach the guidelines students are asked to follow for all 'live' video learning.

From our experiences in last year's lockdown we know that students can easily feel overwhelmed when working remotely. For this reason, I have asked teachers to post work on ClassCharts so that it appears for students only on the day that the lesson will occur. In this sense students see the tasks for that day and, hopefully, this will present their workload to them in a manageable way that more closely matches their college experience.

Material will always be available for students who are not able to be online at the time the lesson is scheduled as we understand the difficulties that access to IT can cause for busy families where siblings are also at home, as well as other family member who might be working too.



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YouTube

Occasionally teachers might direct students to YouTube to watch carefully selected resources. This site is normally blocked on the college network but, in such unusual circumstances, we have decided that, on reflection, the advantages of this outweigh the possible distractions. As such we advise parents whose children are using college laptops to be mindful that, whilst the usual safety content filters are still in place, students will now be able to access non-educational YouTube content on these devices too and that they might wish to supervise this use.

Rewards and Motivation

Another lesson learned last year was how important motivation is to students when their teachers are not in front of them to encourage and support learning. This is foremost in our minds when we plan learning content. However, rewarding student engagement is also highly important and we will be keen to acknowledge students' efforts whenever they engage with the tasks we are setting. A student's behaviour points score is always immediately visible to them (and their parent/carer) through ClassCharts.

Exam year groups and Assessment

As you are probably aware, the Prime Minister's announcement last night acknowledged that public examinations could not go ahead for those year groups who would have ordinarily sat their exams this summer. We appreciate the worry and anxiety this might cause many students. Of course, we do not yet know what the Government's arrangements look like. At the moment we are giving careful consideration to how internally conducted exams can be administered for those students who had expected to be sitting 'mocks' this half term. Faculties are also busy planning how else to best support our students in producing work which will capture their achievements and inform any 'centre-assessed grades' in robust and credible fashion both now and when they return to college later this Spring.

As I have said before, I hope that this information offers some clarity for both yourselves and your children. In the meantime, tutors will be closely monitoring students' engagement with remote learning and making contact to see how their tutees are getting on. Please remember that the tutor should be your first point of contact for general or pastoral matters and the subject teacher (and/or Head of Faculty, for curriculum issues). Naturally I would also welcome your comments and feedback as the days pass so that we can ensure that the students and parents in our college community are working with us as a team in such trying times.

Yours faithfully and with my best wishes in difficult times,



Dr Bruce Butt
Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning

