

Sackville News

Friday 8th January 2021



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Dear Parents and Carers

We have successfully reached the end of what has been an extraordinary first week of the spring term **thanks to the hard work of all our staff, students, parents and carers** – working together to the common goal of creating an environment as productive as possible for our students. We have a clearer picture now of the next few weeks and we will begin to see how we can best assess our exam students in the summer. Whilst we are in this period of lockdown, we will revert once again to a weekly edition of *Sackville News* to ensure we keep you fully informed.



At the start of the week it was all about **mass testing**. Monday saw the delivery of thousands of **lateral flow tests** and the necessary equipment to repurpose our D block hall as a testing venue. Staff did the training over New Year's weekend, and we were ready to begin by Monday night.

Mass testing plans of course were put on hold once the **new lockdown** was announced. Tuesday morning saw us scrambling to repurpose all our teaching for remote delivery for the foreseeable future. **Live lessons** began that day anyway for years 11 and 13 and **will become the main way of delivering to all year groups next week**.

Engagement with our live lesson provision has been **extremely high** amongst the exam year groups and though it is not the same as being in a classroom, very good learning can still take

place.

The continuation of learning is particularly important for our exam students, as the government announced on Wednesday that **grades this year would be based on teacher assessment of the students' work**. With more than five months before the grades will need to be submitted, **assessment is continuing**, and **for all exam students everything is to play for**.



This week we have had a classful of **year 7s whose parents are critical workers**. They have been following the work set by teachers this week and have also been supported by specialist teachers. In the afternoon, the students have enjoyed sporting activities with Head of Year Mr Endersby.

work around their live online teaching.

From next week some students from other years are also attending. I would like to thank the staff in school who are making this happen, as they have to fit this



Students have come in this week for **vocational exams** in various subjects. We have tried to make these exams as safe as possible, inviting students in on the school-day before to take a COVID lateral flow test in our adapted D block hall. We have then spaced the students out more than would be normal. Exam boards are putting procedures in place to ensure that students unable to sit the exams this month will not be disadvantaged.

Staff working in the school building are also getting a COVID test each week to ensure the buildings remain as safe as possible.

Staff must **complete an online training course** before assisting in the testing process, and we are training more staff over the coming weeks in anticipation of mass testing being one of the tools to facilitate the return of students to school. I would like to **thank all the parents and carers who volunteered to help with our testing programme**. The closure has meant we do not need you yet, but as we get closer to the reopening of the school we almost definitely will!

In some ways normal life goes on – **our window and roof replacement schedules continue**, and this week has seen the B block fully scaffolded. It will be a better school the students return to.

With the spirit our students showed last spring, and the support offered by their families and the school staff, I am confident we can make a real success of the spring term.

With my best wishes for a safe and healthy week.

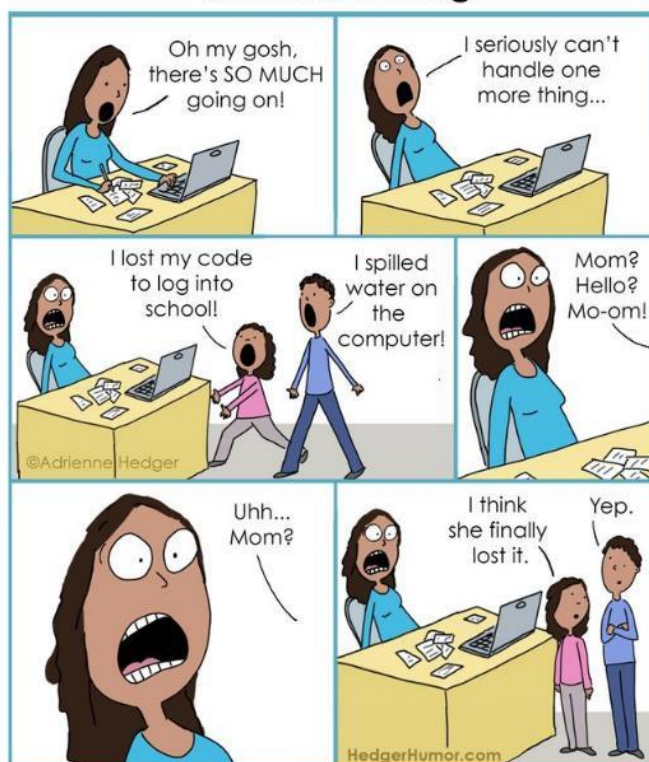
Julian Grant
Headteacher



Notes on online learning

- ❑ From Monday January 11, all students will start to receive **live lessons**. These are delivered through **Google Meet**. These will be notified to students via their school email and will appear on their timetables (in Google Calendar).
- ❑ There will be some subjects for which **live lessons are not appropriate**, and for these other activities will be set. It is also possible that live lessons cannot be delivered because of staff absence, but live lessons should be the major part of the diet for all students.
- ❑ Most **lessons will not last the full hour**, particularly for younger students. Instead, the live teaching will be followed by a task set for the rest of the lesson or for homework. This will allow the students to take short breaks throughout the day, and use homework time for some of the tasks.
- ❑ Work set will be recorded on **Show My Homework**. It may sometimes be submitted to this site, but also often to **Google Classroom**.
- ❑ Different subjects also set work using several **commercial sites**, such as Hegarty Maths and EduCake.
- ❑ All of this means **there can be a few places for students (and parents) to check for both work and feedback**. We want to use the best resources available, and no one site provides everything! You can find links to the common Google applications on the [front of our VLE](#). This also has some [student support pages](#) explaining how some of the technologies work.
- ❑ The materials used for work set and Google Meet are accessible on a conventional smartphone. This is not necessarily the ideal platform for producing work, but students can upload **carefully taken photos of handwritten work** for their assignments.
- ❑ **We will send out a questionnaire in a fortnight** to see how students and parents feel the remote learning is going and will also schedule a **Parents' Focus Group meeting** early this term.
- ❑ There are lots of **excellent online resources for students** who wish to explore further. For now, we will just mention [The Oak Academy](#), which has been set up to support students during the pandemic. A huge range of great lessons and resources are only a click away.
- ❑ Don't forget you can browse the internet using an **Xbox, Playstation** and even the **Wii**. It may seem cumbersome to us adults, but younger hands seem made for game controllers ...
- ❑ Families who **rely on mobile internet provision** may be eligible for [free data allowance increases](#) during the closure. If you think you might be eligible for this, the school has to make the application. Please contact Mr de Souza, adesouza@sackvilleschool.org.uk
- ❑ Finally, if there is competition for devices at home, the [BBC is starting to broadcast lessons on terrestrial TV](#) during this lockdown. No internet connectivity required!

When You Can't Handle One More Thing



Thanks to the [Huffington Post](#)