



23 June 2020

Update on remote learning provision for parents/carers

Dear parents and carers

I hope this communication finds you and your families well.

I write today to ask for your support in engaging your son/daughter with their learning, during this period of partial opening when only Year 10 and Year 12 are in school.

We recently asked parents and students to complete a survey for us to share your views of how we have delivered remote learning up to now. We will be following this up with our annual Victory Voice survey, to help us get an even more detailed understanding of what is working to support students in their learning during this time.

We are very grateful for all those who took the time to share their thoughts with us, and are pleased to share the responses with you today, together with further guidance and answers to some of the frequently asked questions we received.

We have been seeing a decline in engagement from students as the lockdown period continues and we have taken on board your responses, and feedback from teachers and students, to consider how we can improve our Remote Learning provision in Term 6 and increase engagement.

In order to support your child with their continued learning, we would ask that as we approach the summer holidays you continue to encourage your child to attend their live learning support sessions and complete work set on Show My Homework. This will help ensure that they are not disadvantaged upon their return in September.

We appreciate that many of our students may feel daunted by the amount of work they have missed, and this may be causing them to disengage or switch off from their studies. If this applies to your child, please do get in touch. This week, we will be sharing an assembly via Show My Homework for all students, reminding them of the importance of their education and the different ways they can still engage with learning and overcome the barriers they may see as insurmountable. We would greatly appreciate your support in reinforcing this expectation for home learning.



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Survey results

The responses showed that students/parents were particularly happy with the following:

- 82% of parents said they felt work was generally set at an appropriate level.
- A number of parents said they appreciated that students are able to work flexibly and at their own pace, and that they are developing an increasing sense of independence and responsibility.
- Some parents told us that they appreciated being able to support their child, and having more involvement and insight into what their child is learning.
- Students and parents particularly value live learning support sessions.

You told us that some of the things that could be improved were as follows:

1. More opportunities for live learning support sessions and better communication around these.
2. IT support/equipment.
3. More support from the school/better communication with teachers.
4. Feedback regarding your child's progress.
5. More guidance for parents as to how you can support your child.

We also know that for many students and parents, the longer this situation continues, the more challenging it becomes. We hope that some of the information below will provide some support with this.

1. You asked us for more opportunities for live learning support sessions and better communication around these.

We have asked all Heads of Department and teachers to identify when they will be running live learning support sessions.

Your child will still receive Teams and email invitations to these sessions, but we have also provided timetables so that you and your child know when these are taking place and can plan your day accordingly. You can find these timetables on the website or using the link below.

<https://www.thevictoryacademy.org.uk/students-parents/letters-home/>

We have issued guidance to teachers in case they need to cancel or re-schedule live learning support sessions at short notice for any reason, because we recognise the frustration this can cause. Your child should be informed by email or over SMHW of the cancellation or postponement. If for any reason the teacher themselves is not able to let the student know, the Head of Department will be in touch regarding the session. This communication will happen as soon as possible.

We have received guidance that due to GDPR constraints, for years 7 and 8 teachers are not allowed to teach the live session if only one student logs on. This means that if this happens, the teacher will wait a short while to see if any other students join, but then may have to cancel the session.

2. IT support/equipment

You told us that accessing remote learning can be a challenge for some students. You also let us know that some children simply do not have the access to appropriate IT equipment, and even if they do, they do not necessarily have access to this all day.

In the first instance, we have asked teachers to consider setting work which does not always need to be completed on the computer. We appreciate that variety can be beneficial.

If you need support with Teams and ShowMyHomework we have provided guides for students with links on the website:

- **Microsoft Teams:** We have provided a student guide for how to access Teams. Please search for this on the website using the search facility.
- **Show My Homework:** There is a Show My Homework guide on the website for students. Please use the 'search' facility on the website to find this.

If your child is finding it difficult to log into Teams or SMHW, does not know their email address or password, or is experiencing any other issue relating to IT access, please contact the Academy at office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk or call us on 0333 360 2140, and a member of the office staff will be able to support.

We recognise that some students are finding the level of digital literacy required for successful home learning an ongoing challenge. We will endeavour to support as much as possible during this period, but we are also looking at how we can improve training for students on these platforms when we return to school.

In addition, we have made **workpacks** available for those students we know are unable to access remote learning at all. These have been sent home, delivered, or made available for collection. If you would like to request a workpack as your child has no access to a digital device, please contact the Academy at office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk or call us on 0333 360 2140 to make a request.

We understand that access to **resources** can also be a challenge. We are making some resources available for collection at school. If your child would benefit from provision of any of the following resources, please contact us on office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk or call us on 0333 360 2140 to arrange collection from the Academy.

- Lined paper
- Exercise books
- Cartridge paper for Art
- Pens
- Pencils

3. Some parents requested more support from the school and better communication with teachers.

We recognise that some parents and students would appreciate more support from the school during this challenging time. We have a team of support staff contacting parents of students who are struggling to engage with their learning. Heads of Year have been following up with all issues that parents raised through the Student Engagement survey. Heads of Year, Heads of Department and Teachers will continue to contact students if it is perceived that there is a lack of engagement, or any kind of concern.

We recognise that for some students with SEND needs or with low literacy, managing the challenge of remote and digital learning can be significant. We are carrying out additional training with our teachers and support staff to develop our accessibility resources.

In the meantime, please consider taking advantage of all or any of the suggestions for support in this letter, and contact us directly if you would like help. Please also encourage your child to complete the Victory Voice survey, as this will provide us with valuable feedback that we can use to make improvements to our provision.

4. Some parents requested additional feedback regarding your child's progress.

Your child will receive feedback on work they are submitting to their teacher. This will not be on every piece of work and it may not be marked in a traditional way, however they will have an idea of how they are getting on it that subject. Students will also receive immediate feedback upon completion of SMHW quizzes.

We are exploring possibilities for reporting to you by the end of this term on your child's progress with their remote learning and will keep you updated about this.

If your child is falling significantly behind in their home learning, they/you will be contacted by the school to discuss what support they need.

5. You requested more guidance as to how you can support your child in their learning.

Please see below for a range of ideas and suggestions.

Managing the time at home:

Some of you told us that your child appreciates being set all their work for a subject at once, with a long deadline, so they can work at their own pace and take a flexible approach to their remote learning which can fit around your family circumstances.

However some of you said that your child can find this approach overwhelming and would rather be set work for one lesson at a time, with a short deadline. If this is the case we suggest that they follow their usual timetable for the week and stick to this as far as possible, using the work teachers post on SMHW and the schedule of live learning to help structure the day.

If your child is struggling with this please contact us at office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk and a member of staff will get in touch.

If your child is in need of support, particularly pastoral, or regarding mental health or well-being:

Please advise them to email their Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance.

Take a look at Kooth - <https://www.kooth.com/> Free online support available to all students to support mental well-being.

Report It! - *At the top of our website home page there is a Report It! button. Click on this to share any concerns or issues you have whilst school is closed. A member of student services will follow up on this with you.*

If you would like to point your child in the direction of further opportunities to get involved virtually, please see below for extracurricular/super-curricular opportunities for engagement:

English

- The Debate Club - Key Stage 3 - Tuesdays - 13:30 to 14:00 - Contact Mr Rooks
- Film and Script Club - Key Stage 3 -Thursdays - 13:30 to 14:00 - Contact Mr Williams
- Bedrock Stars of the Week - Contact Mr Rooks.
- Book of the Week - see the English Department Newsletter on SMHW or contact Miss Kokkrankal

MFL

- Foreign Language Film Club - Years 7 and 8 - Thursdays - 3.15 – 4.15 - Contact Mr Pugsley

PE

- The PE department have launched a whole school house PE competition called '**The Victory PE Lockdown League House Competition**' known as '**The Lockdown League**' for short. It is open to all staff and pupils and involves weekly challenges that are set on SMHW and mentioned in PE lessons. Pupils submit screen shots/short videos for proof they have done it and get awarded various points for their efforts. Results will be shared with HOYs for inclusion in their weekly bulletin and there will be whole school awards at the end of the 5 weeks. Contact Mrs Kirkaldy for more information.

ICT

- IDEA - <https://idea.org.uk/>
The Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award, known as iDEA is an international programme that helps you develop digital, enterprise and employability skills for free. Through our series of online challenges, you can win career-enhancing badges, unlock new opportunities and, ultimately, gain industry-recognised Awards that help you stand out from the crowd. Contact Mr McAllister

Geography

- Young Geographer of the Year - Key Stage 3 and 4
<https://www.rgs.org/schools/competitions/young-geographer-of-the-year/2020-competition/>
Contact Mr Anderson

Art

- Anime Club - run by Mrs Sugar
It is a newsletter with ideas and challenges sent out to all of the students that emailed showing an interest. Open to all year groups but currently have a group of 7's and 8's. As students send in their responses to the challenge they are shared with the rest of the group on the newsletter each week.
- Art weekly newsletter, separate to the above, that has current Art info to read and external competitions for the students to get involved in - this is for all year groups and students can ask their Art teacher if they need support with anything.

Maths

- Students can take part in real life maths problem solving exercises by visiting NRICH website by clicking on to the following link. It is sponsored by the University of Cambridge.

<https://nrich.maths.org/secondary>

PA

- Keep an eye on your emails and Show My Homework for the Performing Arts challenge! Each week we will be setting a different PA-related challenge. Get involved to show off your skills.

Regular Activities from Heads of Year and form tutors:

Weekly Newsletters from HOY: Each week your HOY sends out a Newsletter to you with information relevant to your learning and well-being. In addition this will include information on our Theme of the Week.

Form Tutor – Form tutors are employing a variety of means of keeping in contact with students at this time. Some tutors are holding form times, some are emailing students and some are using Forms to keep in contact with students.

Assemblies – Do check your Teams calendar for Year Group Assemblies and Form Times.

For year 12 students: Weekly newsletters are provided, with pastoral support and careers information. These are emailed to students and uploaded to the website each week.

Year 12: aspirations and next steps:

For Year 12 students, it is really important that you begin work on your university applications, or explore your options for apprenticeships. Please see the following links for help:

Applying for university:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/advice-parents-and-guardians/ucas-undergraduate-application-process>.

All the links below can be found in our career advice and guidance section of our website:

Find an apprenticeship:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

Apprentice vacancies

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies/>

Apprentice parents pack

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/app/uploads/2020/02/Parent-Pack-February-2020.pdf>

Apprentice student guide

https://amazingapprenticeships.com/app/uploads/2020/03/Interactive-Student-Guide_2020.pdf

I would like to be able to point my child in the direction of some more websites or online resources which can support them in their learning. Can you suggest some?

There are many free platforms and websites which your child can use to supplement their remote learning.

- The Oak National Academy is a free online classroom and resource hub created by teachers to help teachers and parents to support students and children during this challenging time. There are video lessons and resources for a range of subjects.
<https://www.thenational.academy/>
- BBC Bitesize will be familiar to most students and provides a range of resources, videos and quizzes to support learning. You can find topics related to that which your child is currently studying. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>
- Seneca Learning is another great free platform, which many students will be familiar with. It uses quizzing to promote retrieval and recall, and to check understanding. Your child's teacher may have allocated topics for your child, but you can also find your own.
<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

- Medway Libraries have put this document together setting out an enormous amount of resources that they have available: <https://www.thevictoryacademy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Medway-Libraries-Online-Resources-Guide-for-Secondary-Schools-1.pdf>

We recognise that there is a lot of information here – as mentioned throughout this letter, if you or your child are struggling with any of this, please get in touch with us at office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk and a member of staff will get in touch with you. Your child's well-being and their continued engagement in learning are our absolute priorities, and we will do all we can to provide support.

Yours sincerely,



Ms M Gage
Director of Education (Chatham)