



KING JAMES'S SCHOOL

KNARESBOROUGH

25th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I posted a video update on our website yesterday afternoon but I didn't write to you yesterday. This communication wraps up a few things I raised in the video along with some further information.

GCSE and A Level Exams and UCAS:

We have had confirmation that the exam boards will be communicating with us next week about how they will be awarding grades to students at GCSE and A Level. The Sixth Form have emailed and texted updates, including messages from UCAS, direct to Year 13 students, so please do look out for those. All Year 13 communication about UCAS will be coming out from Mr O'Hara and Sixth Form team. As far as GCSE is concerned we will communicate with you when we understand the methodology that is being used to calculate grades. I am very grateful to parents and Year 11 pupils who have respected my request not to ask teachers about forecast grades. Please stick to this so that we can communicate consistent messages when we have more to tell you.

The 'hard yards':

I said in my video log yesterday that we have got some tough times ahead of us. I was thinking about how stressful it sometimes gets in my house on a normal Sunday evening when my children are finishing off homework and I'm struggling to help them with their maths or science (no problem with their history!). Magnify that normal homework stress by 20, and then add the stress of the whole family staying at home for a prolonged period. Even with tolerance and love in the family it's going to get fractious at times. Please remember that we are not asking you to home school your children. As I said in my video yesterday, **do the best you can, try to get a routine in the day and go for 'little and often' rather than giving up.**

Mr McIntosh and Miss Cunningham have put together a great one side **guide for parents to supporting home learning**. I've attached it to this email.

We have also thought really carefully about what to do about our personal, social and health education programme (PSHCE), or, as I call it, "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll". We have decided to try to keep teaching this programme, even though it is best taught face to face in a classroom. There are some topics with very sensitive content, such as eating disorders, that we have decided we cannot just send home for online learning. However, there are some topics, for example, on sex and relationships and mental health which we really want to keep delivering, so we will.

Our designated ICT helpdesk for technical issues with online learning is available at itslearning@king-james.co.uk

That's all for now, thanks for reading.

Yours sincerely,

Mr CA Sugden
Headteacher

Guide for Parents to Supporting Home Learning

1. Firstly, we genuinely sympathise with the plethora of difficulties that you may face as a parent during this challenging time. You may be working, you may be delivering online content yourself, you may have younger children, or a combination of all of these factors.
2. This is not home schooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting on the whole world. Let's keep perspective. Home schooling is a choice, where you considered, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. The situation we all find ourselves in is not home schooling.
3. The resources on it's Learning have been designed as low maintenance for you as a parent yet crucially still engaging and interesting enough for your child to be challenged.
4. We have found that if you are able to put together a plan of sorts regarding periods of time to do work, this can really help with things.
5. Also within the plan, building in some down time and breaks can act as a great motivator to your child and help them get through the tasks that have been set. Although we want all of our students to engage in the tasks set, they are not expected to follow the timings of the school day and we want things to be flexible.
6. In any classroom, teachers will not look at all pieces of work. The students learn by doing activities themselves so much of what your child does at home will not need specific feedback. When they complete more challenging or involved pieces of work, teachers will be able to respond and let them know how they could improve further. We trust our teachers to use their professional judgement to find the right points in your child's learning to do this. As teachers we really do welcome though when students start to engage with us in the feedback we give. it's Learning is split into tasks and assignments. Assignments need returning to the teacher, tasks don't.
7. Any sort of physical activity during the day will also help with not just everyone's physical health, but also our mental health too.
8. Keep expectations realistic. You know your child best and whether it is working little and often, or doing more of the academic tasks in the morning rather than later in the day; choose a strategy that works for all of you.
9. This could also be an opportunity to engage in so many other areas of life skills that don't involve always sitting in front of a screen. Many families will now be spending more time together in each other's company. Let's treasure and make the most of that time.
10. Finally you are doing enough. You are loving your kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. Minimising stress is absolutely vital in a time like this for mental health. Don't let this be something that stresses you. In these unprecedented times, all any of us can do is to do our best and please be reassured that you have our support and guidance when you need it.