



6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

This has been quite a week of rapid and extreme change. We have begun teaching remotely through the Virtual School and are moving as quickly as possible to resolve the inevitable problems that will arise. Please do bear with us! Some staff and children are now very experienced in teaching and learning this way and for others it is still new. All assignments and homework will be placed on 'Teams', so we ask that you please continue to support us and ensure our students are accessing all the materials available to them.

We are making some changes to the organisation of the school day from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January as outlined below. These changes apply only for the current lockdown period.

Firstly, we would like to change the timings of the school day so that all lessons will take place at the same time. There is no need for the level of staggering of arrival/leaving times, breaks and lunch times during this period as the numbers in school are much lower than normal. We will also move back to shorter lessons, which are easier for the students to manage when working online. The changes will also enable students who are accessing our key worker provision, to travel to school in lighter conditions.

If students who are coming into school do arrive early, then the school is open from 8:20 am and they will be cared for until lessons start. We would like all students to enter through the main entrance where they will be registered. They will follow the same teaching online as students at home. Students are not required to wear their school uniform during this period and should dress warmly, as we are keeping high levels of ventilation in rooms where people are working.

### **The Virtual School day**

Students working at home should be online for 9:00am for form time with their tutors. Registers will be taken, and parents will be contacted if students are not online. If your child is unwell and cannot take part in virtual lessons, please do contact the school as normal.

<b>Form Time</b>	9:00 - 9:15am
<b>Period 1</b>	9:15 - 10:10am
<b>Period 2</b>	10:15 - 11:15am
<b>Break</b>	11:15 - 11:30am
<b>Period 3</b>	11:30 - 12:30pm
<b>Lunch</b>	12:30 - 1:00pm
<b>Period 4</b>	1:00 - 1:55pm
<b>Period 5</b>	2:00 - 3:00pm

As usual we have high standards in terms of student behaviour and students must be polite and respectful to staff and their peers.

It is currently our intention that Year 11 mock exams, scheduled for the start of March will take place. Year 13 mock exams have been re-scheduled to take place at the same time. We will update you any changes as they take place.

If your child is in a year group with a scheduled parents' evening this half term, a separate letter will be sent to you. Our plan is to continue with parents' evenings in the form of telephone appointments and more information will follow.

### **Communication**

As at the previous lockdown, staff will be making contact with all parents / carers on a regular basis. These calls will be between 9-3pm, Monday to Friday and may be from a withheld number. The purpose of these calls is to offer further pastoral support and hopefully answer any questions that may arise. In the meantime, if you do need additional pastoral support, this can be found by emailing [student.support@hermitageacademy.co.uk](mailto:student.support@hermitageacademy.co.uk). or by visiting [Mental Health \(hermitageacademy.co.uk\)](https://www.hermitageacademy.co.uk/mental-health)

### **Testing for Covid-19**

Hermitage is now ready to conduct Lateral flow testing. If you want your child to be tested, consent forms will need to be completed and these will be distributed to the parents of children working at home, prior to their return to school. It will take significant time to run these tests for students where consent is given and we will begin the testing with the older year groups.

For those students accessing the current provision in school, we would like to offer the testing programme starting as soon as consent forms are returned.

### **Books**

Students requiring an exercise books within which to work and complete online tasks, are able to collect them from school reception. We have maths, science and general exercise books at reception. Students should use their specific subject books as far as possible.

### **Sixth Form**

Sixth form are not required to be online for form time as provision is different for older students. Messages will continue to be delivered by their respective Heads of Year using the Microsoft Teams platform and in addition, students will receive one welfare call per week from a member of the 6<sup>th</sup> form team. Students will also be expected to attend one Teams meeting per week with their form tutors and participate in the scheduled PSHE lessons.

With kind regards

Dr Janice Gorch  
**Deputy Chief Executive Officer**

Mr Darren Stewart  
**Head of School**