



St Thomas More

Catholic School & Sixth Form College

Ref: TS/JW/Remote Learning

8th January 2021

Dear parents and carers

I hope you are well. As you are aware, Year 11 students have been accessing remote learning already this week and it has been a huge success. We are extremely grateful for the support we have received from parents and careers in what we know are challenging circumstances. From Monday 11th January we are moving to remote learning for all students in Years 7-11 as per the Government guidance issued on Monday 4th January.

I thought it would be helpful to summarise our expectations and the steps we have taken to ensure that all students receive a high quality remote learning experience during lockdown.

How will remote learning work for students?

- All students should follow their normal school timetable. New timetables have been issued to students in Years 7-9 which take effect from Monday 11th January. You should have received this in the post.
- Break and lunchtimes should be taken at the same times as the school day. It is important for students to ensure they have some down-time.
- At least 50% of all remote lessons will be live lessons delivered via Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams.
- All remaining lessons will be either pre-recorded video lessons with annotated PowerPoints and follow on tasks.
- All communication for all lessons wither live or pre-recorded is via Google Classroom.
- All students have been issued with their Google Classroom codes and should have already joined their relevant classes. Google Classroom codes are located on the school website in the COVID-19 folder.
- Students' fortnightly Personal Development lesson will go ahead as normal with Form Tutors on a Tuesday Week 1 period 1. This will always be a live lesson and will provide an opportunity for students to touch base with their Form Tutor to raise any concerns and for Form Tutors to complete safeguarding and wellbeing checks.
- Students should make notes on paper if they do not have their exercise books at home and will be asked to upload completed tasks onto Google Classroom.
- Core PE lessons will not take place. This timetabled session will allow students some down-time and an opportunity to relax or engage in some exercise if they choose. The PE department has provided some information on our school Facebook page about suggested sporting activities during lockdown.

Expectations of students accessing live lessons

- All students are required to engage every day with their remote learning. Students should be ready to log onto Google Classroom at the start of every day in order to access learning.
- It is important that any illness related absence is reported to the school in the usual way (telephone 02476 642400 before 8.50am each morning).

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- A register will be taken by the class teacher at the start of every live lesson and any absences will be reported to parents and carers via text.
- Parents and carers will receive a phone call if a student is persistently absent from live lessons.
- If students continue to be absent from their live lessons and/or not engage with remote learning, despite support from their learning mentors and/or Head of Year, they may be asked to attend school as a 'vulnerable' learner.
- For the safety and protection of staff and students, all live lessons are being recorded.
- Students should never share the link to a live lesson with any other students either within or outside St Thomas More Catholic Academy.
- When students join a live lesson, they should join via the link on Google Classroom. They will be prompted to enter their name. Students must enter the lesson using their full name, not a nickname. Any students attempting to enter a lesson without using their correct name will be denied access to the lesson.
- There is a 'chat' facility on each of the remote learning platforms which allow students to ask their teacher questions. It should not be used to communicate with other students in the class. Any inappropriate use of the 'chat' facility will result in students being removed from the lesson.
- Students are permitted to have the video facility (camera on) if they wish. The exception to this is during the Personal Development live lesson with Form Tutors during which all students will be asked to put their camera at the start of the lesson for the purpose of a safe and well-being check.
- Students will be put on 'mute' by the class teacher at the start of the lesson and will be 'unmuted' when required to contribute verbally to the lesson.
- For any technical issues, please email stm.it@st-thomas-more.net

Finally

We understand this is a difficult time for parents and carers and we are here to support you. Remote learning can never replace the face to face teaching in a classroom but you are doing an amazing job supporting your child and the school through these challenging times. Well done to our wonderful students on the resilience they have shown throughout. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at school if you have any concerns about your child's remote learning or require support. The school reception is manned every day from 8.30am – 4.30pm. Alternatively text or call 07918 748834 or 07493 034463. If you have any suggestions on how we could improve any aspect of our remote learning practices, then please email admin@st-thomas-more.net.

Yours sincerely

Leearna Thomas
Principal