



18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to my latest update and I do hope you and your family continue to be safe and well. Unfortunately, we are increasingly aware of families within our community who have suffered the devastating loss of a family member due to COVID-19. I am sure that everyone would join me in giving our heartfelt sympathies to those have been affected in such a way by this terrible virus. It provides us with a constant reminder that we must all follow the current advice and 'stay at home' if at all possible to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

I would also like to express our thanks to all the frontline workers and particularly those who work in the NHS and the care sector for all the tremendous work they are doing in such difficult circumstances. We are incredibly appreciative of the selfless work you do and the school is more than happy to support you and your families in any way we can.

Whilst your child is learning at home, if they do fall ill or test positive for COVID-19, then please continue to inform us at school. There may be other reasons why your child is struggling with their home learning and we encourage you to get in touch if this is the case so that the school and teachers are aware.

We are really grateful for all the positive feedback we are receiving regards our provision for home learning. It is fantastic to see more and more children getting involved every day. All the staff at Stafford Manor High School would like to express their sincerest thanks for everything you are doing to support your child at home. Please be reassured that our flexible approach to home learning, by using a combination of Show My homework and Microsoft Teams for live support, is meeting all the latest Government expectations. Many parents are letting us know that their child welcomes the structure that is being provided. Furthermore, your feedback is also saying that the communication with teachers through Teams is not only supporting your child's learning but also their wellbeing. We do expect all children to complete the work set and from today teachers will be recording every child's level of engagement with their work. This will allow us to provide further help and support to those most in need.

To support children with work at home we have distributed information that may be of help. **How to use your Xbox or PlayStation as a computer.** This is a great way to improve your child's ability to complete work if you don't have a laptop. Let school know if you need a keyboard and mouse to help.

**How to apply for free data on your mobile phone provider.** If you provide us with some information we can apply to get you free data whilst your child is working at home. Certain conditions apply and not every network provider is covered.

**Help sheet for pupils on how to use Microsoft Teams.** This will guide you and your child to use Teams. If you haven't tried it yet – give it a go and get involved with everyone else!

**Programmes & apps to support online learning.** This provides some helpful programmes, websites and features that may help with your child's learning at home.

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During all live Teams sessions we expect children will maintain a high standard of behaviour and adopt a 'professional approach'. Teachers will always be looking to reward pupils by awarding achievement points for positive behaviour. Please be aware that if any help is requested outside the lesson time, a member of staff may not be able to respond immediately. Teachers may be involved in another lesson and they also need a break and time for lunch!

We have now distributed the vast majority of laptops to families who were contacted and subsequently requested them. The Government have announced that schools will receive additional allocations at the beginning of February and we look forward to being able to support even more children. Equipment packs should reach all Pupil Premium children through this week and provide resources for written and creative work. All families with children eligible for free school meals will be receiving a supermarket voucher from this week onwards. Don't forget that the COVID section of our website also contains links to a wide range of useful organisations that can help in supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing. If there is something else that you feel would help your child at home then do get in touch with us at school and we will hopefully find a way to support you.

We have now established a test site in school that meets all Public Health guidance and we have a fully trained test team to deliver rapid coronavirus testing in school. This week we will be using Lateral Flow Devices to test staff to identify any asymptomatic cases in school. Later this week we believe we will be in a position to start offering a test to pupils currently attending school. Please remember that testing is not mandatory and a parent must provide consent before their child can take a test. However, we do firmly believe that by introducing rapid testing at Stafford Manor High School, we are only strengthening our system of controls to keep everyone as safe as possible.

We have been communicating with families of Year 11 and 13 pupils since the start of term in response to the announcement regards exams this summer. Late on Friday, Ofqual published a consultation on the proposals that will lead to the submission of grades this year. I would like confirm that we will be responding to the consultation by placing the best interests of every single child at the heart of our response. We are committed to ensuring that we will do everything within our powers to ensure all children gain the grades that they deserve.

I am extremely proud of our pupils who have adapted so well to the new ways of learning at the start of 2021. Indeed, you should be proud of what you have achieved in supporting your child through the first phase of the lockdown. We will continue to get the best outcomes for your child by working together and celebrating their successes together. Focus on the positives and you will be amazed how much easier the day can be. As always we are here if you need any help, support or advice. Stay safe and stay calm.

Yours sincerely



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