



Update to parents about home-based learning – Tuesday 24th March

Dear Parents/Carers

We have been overwhelmed by your positive messages over the last few days. It is hard to believe how much has happened in the last week and we now find ourselves in the strange new world of more than 90% of our students being based at home. We are continually adjusting and improving our approach and we value all of your feedback. In the meantime, here are some updates.

Online learning

All students currently have access to packs – a range of resources and activities for different subjects which provide purposeful work at least another week. Some students will be sharing computers with other family members while others will have much easier access to technology. Mobile phones and tablets are useful, but it is difficult to produce a decent piece of extended writing without a keyboard. Some students and families love the latest technology while others don't feel very tech-savvy. All students work at different paces, and potentially at different times. In addition to this, the strain of so much use from students across the country has meant that many online learning resources have crashed or slowed down at times this week. Our approach to online learning has to recognise all of these things.

Here is how it will work from next week (30th March).

We will use **EduLink** as the central location for setting future work. It will be set as 'homework' and will always have a reasonable deadline. Please ensure that your son or daughter is able to log in to EduLink. EduLink will also give details of which work students should be sending or uploading for teacher feedback, and how they should do this. Login instructions are at the end of this message and please contact IT support if you need any help with a student accessing EduLink.

Our preferred platform for online learning and interaction with teachers will be **Google Classrooms**. Some teachers will set up 'live' sessions where students can post questions and responses on a forum. Google Classrooms also allows students to view help videos, upload work, pictures and other projects directly, cutting down on the need for email traffic. More details will follow, but for now please make sure your son or daughter's school Google login works. Again, info on how to use the Google login can be found further down this email.

We have lots more in the pipeline, but this week please continue to work on what is in the packs and make sure the above logins for EduLink and Google are working. These should be more reliable than the other remote access login options. Many teachers are already contacting classes to offer further support and activities, and you are welcome to contact subject teachers for help with the work set. There is more guidance on the school website.

Health and wellbeing are of paramount importance right now

It appears that this situation will continue for some time, and we need to put wellbeing at the very top of our list of priorities in the upcoming weeks and months.

Some sort of physical exercise each day can give all of us a massive boost and make the rest of the day much more positive for everyone involved. The **PE with Joe** daily workout takes place at 9.00 each morning and lasts for 30 minutes. Hundreds of thousands of families are using this free resource to start their day.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

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There is also plenty of support available for mental wellbeing. You can always contact the school's Talk2us email address, and there are many other resources available to help at this time. Here are just a few examples.

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse97a58>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/mar/22/family-isolation-guide-for-parents-teenagers-coronavirus-lockdown>

In terms of wellbeing and distance learning, we strongly believe that students should not be staring at screens all day. With so much of the distance learning being computer-based, and some of the teenagers' free time also likely to be linked to screen use in some way, we need to find ways to avoid overloading them with screen time. If you ever think that the young person has spent too long using the computer in a day, always feel free to stop that work and focus on something else until the following morning. We will aim to provide some work options that do not require continuous screen use to support this.

Different projects

To avoid an overload of screen time, we strongly encourage parents, wherever possible, to use your talents to give the young people a varied life of home learning. Teach them to cook, help plan meals and food orders, keep the house clean and tidy, learn a musical instrument together, work on a craft project, explore your family history, learn to sew, garden, care for pets, fix things, decorate... anything safe that you can teach the young people will give their daily life some variety, get them away from that screen and provide some positive family time. We would love to see pictures of anything you do!

Work over Easter

We are currently deciding how much to set the students for the Easter break. Schools across the country are approaching that fortnight in many different ways and we would like parent feedback on the best way to proceed. One idea is to offer a small number of longer extended projects with some optional academic tasks alongside these.

Culture

A final thing to mention – you can access a huge amount of enriching culture online right now and it might help to keep the mind and soul in shape. Reading is the perfect way to go on adventures without leaving the house, and if you can find a way to build this habit into each day, the young people will gain so much from it. The National Literacy Trust has reading guidance for families with younger students <https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/>. Hundreds of excellent e-books are also available for all ages at reasonable prices from the usual commercial suppliers, with countless websites available to help you choose the right books (you could start with <https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/teen> or <https://www.worldbookday.com/reading-ideas-youll-love/>). Museums and art galleries often offer fantastic virtual tours. Here are some links to help with this:

<https://artsandculture.google.com/>

[https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-](https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour)

[tour https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx](https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx)

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Thanks as always for your ongoing support. We will be in touch again on Monday with the next updates on home learning.

Joe Curtis

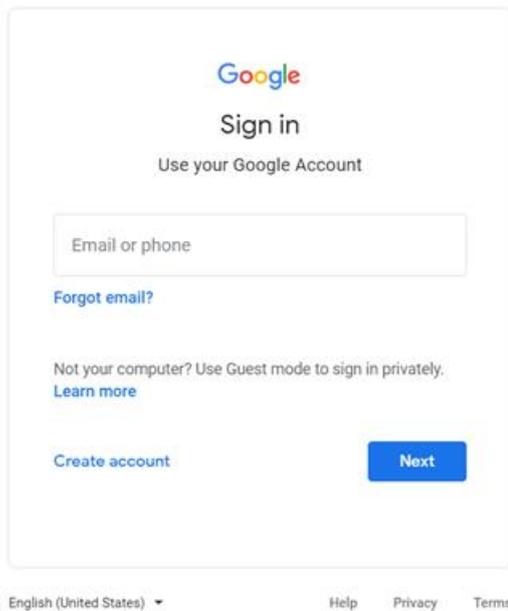
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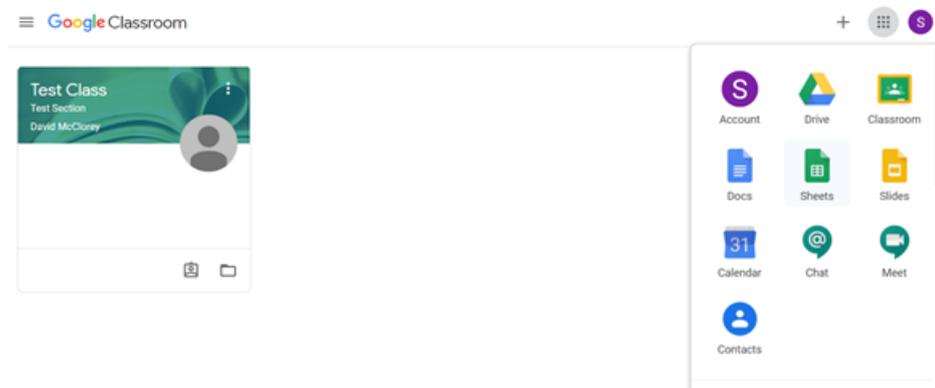
Google Classroom – classroom.google.com

Communicate and collaborate work between teachers and students. Sign in with school email and password.

1. Sign in to Google using existing school email and password.



2. Use Google Classroom, or any of the other Google Drive, Google Documents or Google Hangout Meets.



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Willingdon

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Edulink – <https://www.edulinkone.com/#!/login>

School parent and student platform

School ID: WILLINGDON

1. FOR STUDENTS: Sign in using School ID "WILLINGDON" and existing school username and password
2. FOR PARENTS: Sign in using School ID "WILLINGDON" and credentials previously issued to emails registered with the school.



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