



6th January 2021

Dear Year 11 and 13 parents/carers,

Spring Term 1 – Year 11 and Year 13

We are pleased to have started live lessons with Years 11 and 13 this morning. We know many parents and pupils have worked hard at home to set up working spaces and ensure devices are ready.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have any barriers to accessing live lessons by emailing Mr Ali via w.ali@decschool.co.uk so we can support with solutions available to us.

We wanted to let you know the plan for remote learning for examination year groups moving forward with school now closed until February half term and the announcements yesterday stating that exams will not go ahead as normal this year.

The full details of the implications for schools can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#going-to-school-college-and-university>

What is happening with examinations?

At the moment, all we know is what has been announced by The Government which is:

“We do not think it is possible for all exams in the summer to go ahead as planned. We will accordingly be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly to put in place alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly”.

We have written separately today regarding the BTEC examinations due to take place this half term. Please access this letter via the text link sent, or via the website.

What does this mean for Year 11 and 13 now?

At the moment, we are waiting to receive information from QfQUAL and exam boards. As soon as we have any further information, we will update parents, carers and pupils.

What we anticipate is that internal information is likely to be a very important factor in a process for qualifications this year. At this time, that would include the attendance and engagement in live lessons, online curriculum activities completed at home and the submission of work as directed by the remote curriculum plans as well as teachers who will set tasks during live lessons.

It is therefore vital that Year 11 and 13 pupils attend all of their live lessons on time and complete all work set, submitting work according to the instructions given.

How will Year 11 and 13 lessons look moving forward?

From Wednesday 6th January, all Year 11 and 13 lessons are being delivered live on MS Teams. This will now also continue in line with pupils’ timetables for the duration of the school closure period. Therefore, pupils should be ready and logged on to MS Teams for the start of each school day. The teacher of each lesson they are due to attend will invite each pupil into the lesson which will involve approximately 20 minutes of direct teaching, followed by a set of activities. The lesson will conclude with a short period of review. For 6th form, all students should be checking their school email daily and responding to any emails from teachers.



During the Live Lesson, pupils will not be permitted to have their camera on and will be required to communicate with the member of staff via the chat function rather than through spoken dialogue. This due to the number of pupils in the lesson and the difficulty created when multiple people speak at any one time.

Our only access to the internet is 4G, what if my child runs out of data?

The Government have launched a scheme to support children's access to remote learning and are allowing networks to increase data allowances during the period of school closures. To find out how to activate this on your child's device if they need it, visit: <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/about-increasing-mobile-data?fbclid=IwAR0ChUEISt-GDOb2SKIAi5h769cgCABtk6kRvKUXNCMEK0jhPNnCZaPpn1k>

What about the mock exams?

We understand that Year 11 and 13 will have worked extremely hard in preparation for the mock exams which were due to begin on Monday 11th January. To ensure this hard work isn't wasted and the mock exams are used to best effective in the circumstances, Year 11 and 13 pupils can expect their Live Lessons during the mock weeks to consist of 'Walking-Talking' mocks where teachers will provide specific modelling, as well as time for pupils to attempt many of the questions in each paper.

How will pupils get copies of the mock papers to support 'Walking-Talking' mocks?

Pupils will be expected to attend school on **Friday 8th January** during a designated time slot.

We are also aware that for Year 11 pupils, your child's **revision guides** may be on school site in their locker. This will also be an opportunity to collect these ensuring every pupil feels supported throughout these during their remote learning.

To ensure that the day is conducted in line with government safety guidance, pupils must only arrive at school during their allocated time slot. On arrival, pupils must report to the sports hall for collection of their full set of mock papers. Pupils will be escorted into the relevant school area to access their locker to collect revision guides if required:

Surname Initial	Time Slot
A to F	9:00 – 10:00
G to N	10:00 – 11:00
O to Z	11:00 – 12:00

We politely ask that pupils do not arrive earlier than their allocated time slot and depart from school site promptly following collection of their exam papers and revision guides (from lockers if required) This is to ensure safe and appropriate social distancing is adhered to in school and around the local community.

Why are pupils completing mock exams at home when the summer exams will not take place as normal?

As mentioned above, we remain committed to ensuring that your child receives the very best education. The mock exams provide an excellent indication of your child's performance in each of their subjects and will provide them with an opportunity to apply their revision. This will enable teachers to assess progress and to maximise the remaining time left in this academic year to ensure all pupils continue to receive an outstanding education. Pupils have also worked incredibly hard in their preparation for these mock exams and deserve the opportunity to sit them.



Why can't the mock exams take place when pupils return to school?

When schools reopen there will be limited time remaining in Year 11 and 13. Mock exams typically take place over a 3-week period. This would mean less direct face-to-face teaching time delivered by our subject staff. To ensure that our pupils are confidently equipped with the knowledge and understanding required to move into further or higher education, we believe this face-to-face teaching will be more valuable following a period of school closure.

Will my child be required to hand-in these mock papers?

Yes when school reopens so pupils should keep them safe until they are back in school.

Should my child continue to prepare for these exams?

Yes. As mentioned in my previous letter in December, it is important to approach these exams with the same rigour as if it were the summer exams. The next steps in your child's educational journey will almost certainly involve exams and therefore developing good habits are key to success. Subject staff will guide pupils on this and signpost them to effective resources.

What is happening for pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals?

We will make contact with all parents of pupils who are eligible for FSM over the coming days to offer a food parcel covering the first two weeks of school closure. Parents/ carers will need to confirm they would like a parcel before we order goods and packaging. Once parcels are ready for collection, we will make contact to outline arrangements for collection.

Will appointments with our careers advisor still go ahead?

Yes. Mrs Fellows will continue to meet with pupils by telephone call according to the weekly schedule we would have run in school. This means all pupils will receive the necessary advice and guidance to support their college applications and future career planning. Pupil should continue to monitor their school email address for regular updates regarding this.

Can pupils attend school?

School is closed for almost all pupils. The only pupils who are in school are those whose parents are critical workers who have requested provision and those who are deemed vulnerable according to support they may be receiving from Birmingham Children's Trust. If you feel you require a critical work place for your child in school, please contact Mr Ali via w.ali@decschool.co.uk.

Is COVID-19 testing continuing?

No. We will continue with a very small scale testing facility for staff who are working on site, and for pupils who are attending school as part of the key worker/ vulnerable provision. The Government have indicated that mass testing may take place prior to schools reopening later in the term.

RESPECT

ASPIRE



Dame Elizabeth
CADBURY
www.decschool.co.uk

BELIEVE

COMMIT

What can I do if I need advice/ support?

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us. For Year 13, please contact Mr Hanson via o.hanson@decschool.co.uk. For Year 11, please contact your child's Head of House or Mr Smith via j.smith@decschool.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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