

12th February 2021

Tel: 01582 611600
Email: admin@lealands.luton.sch.uk
Website: www.lealands.luton.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mr J Burridge BA (Hons) PGCE, MA, NPQH

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have now had 6 weeks of full online 'School at Home' for most students which has been highly successful. We are very conscious, that despite talk in the media about 'catch up', this will not be feasible in the future and so our approach has been to ensure that students 'keep up' and do not lose any learning time.

As we have continued to learn and invest in online learning, it has become clear that in many cases it is not second best to in school learning and can, in some cases, be as good, if not even better! We have worked very hard to ensure everyone is benefitting from this by supplying nearly 300 devices and 40+ internet dongles. We have also been making regular calls to break down any barriers to online learning; including bringing some students into school when they simply cannot get internet connection at home. We have continued to support our vulnerable and key worker children in school and have approximately 80 attending throughout the week.

Our Google Meet registrations and live lesson elements have been highly successful. In our recent survey 93% of parents said the Google Classroom lessons were good or better and 18% said they were excellent. Students have been working hard. In their survey 86.4% say they are working 5 or more hours a day and another 9.6% are working for 4 or more. Students are very positive about their online lessons and have found the live elements really helpful. 91% of parents think the school is supporting its students well during lockdown with 7.3% being unsure. We have been in contact with parents who expressed concerns or required support to improve this even further.

We have been working hard to follow up attendance and issues with work completion. Our online attendance is currently around 96% which is in-line with normal school attendance at Lealands (well above the national average). We are very proud of our students for shining above the rest in this way. In the past week alone approximately 20,000 STEPs have been awarded and we have updated our online reward shop in Epraise to ensure students can choose and receive rewards at home. After half term, we will be registering every hour rather than just every lesson to ensure that students are fully engaged throughout every lesson.

Our staff have been becoming increasingly expert in all the technologies and ad-ons to make their lessons even better and they have been sharing their learning to support colleagues. They have also developed their confidence in delivering live elements; including many full live lessons. However, we also know that independent work and work away from the screen is important and so these form part of the curriculum for all our students. In addition to live lessons online, staff and parents have been getting used to live online parents evenings. These have gone very well this term (with the odd technical hiccup for some individuals) and the feedback has been tremendous. It seems that many

parents and teachers favour this online system to the traditional in-school meetings so we will be looking at whether this continues along with many other things we have developed.

After half term, we anticipate an announcement about students returning to school. We are really looking forward to this when it is appropriate. We know there are many aspects of school life that our students and staff are missing, despite the excellent online learning. We remain unsure about how and when the return will take place but have been told that we will have two week's notice to put in place any new plans or strategies that may be required. In the meantime, we have invested in an online exam package called Exam.net so that our Year 11 students will be able to take the mock GCSEs in March at home with a range of online controls and checks in place. This system will also be used for some assessments in assessment weeks. We still do not know what the plan is for awarding GCSEs this year and await the outcome of the Ofqual consultation which closed two weeks ago. However, our fantastic Year 11 students, are working tirelessly to ensure that they have the best opportunity to demonstrate the grades they should get with the mocks being a crucial part of this.

Over half term, we will not be setting any school work, although students are welcome to extend their studies and Year 11 should be revising for mocks. We would suggest that the time is used for activities that are active and creative so that students get a well deserved break despite being limited in where they can go and what they can do.

I hope that you and your family remain safe and well and are continuing to stay as positive as possible about the future in these difficult and challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



John Burridge
Headteacher



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