

4th February 2021

HEAD OF SCHOOL: Mr I Bacon

Dear Parents and Carers,

Changes made in response to Remote Learning survey

I promised you that I would write to you this week to follow up on some of the actions we are taking following the Remote Learning survey. Below you will find a list of the areas we have considered and some changes we have made or suggestions we have.

1. Socialising with Friends

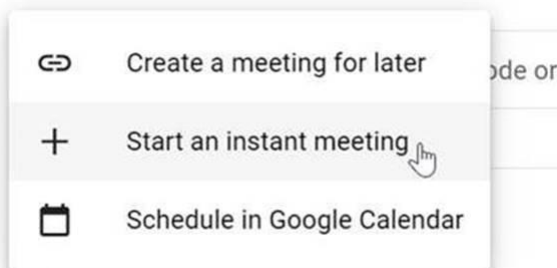
Many students are communicating with their friends through gaming devices and others stay in touch via social media, including face to face 'phone' calls. For some students this either is not possible or has limiting factors.

Providing an open forum on which many students can chat is difficult to monitor and can be open to the potential of unkind comments or at risk of members outside of the Watling community being invited in by other students. Sadly, we do not have the resources or facilities to monitor such 'meets' or to deal with any issues that may arise.

One way we have supported students to meet with their friends is by providing information on how to use google meet. This has successfully enabled a few students, under the guidance of their parents, to meet and chat with friends. Please see below instructions on how this can be set up by students with parental support.

You will need to sign up for a google account (unless you already have one) and the website to use is <https://meet.google.com/>

When you want to start a meeting with your friends. You sign in. Once signed in with your Google account you would click "new meeting", then click on start instant meeting (see screenshot below).



Respect / Responsibility / Kindness

At this point, send the URL that is presented (see screenshot below) over to your friends on school emails. Once sent you need to press the join now button and then wait for your friends to join (you will probably have to allow them into the meeting). When we tested it, a box appears at the top saying that someone is trying to get into the meeting They will be able to join your meeting and catch up.



I hope this might provide a platform for students to socialise with their friends but must stress that members of Watling staff are not monitoring these conversations.

2. Homework

Many of you told us you felt that on top of the remote learning programme the setting of homework was not helpful and could cause stresses after a long day for everyone at home. Whilst we do still very much believe in the positive role that homework plays in developing good study habits, independence and consolidating learning we recognise that during this difficult time there is a need to carefully balance the positives with the challenges we all face.

From now on, therefore, teachers will not be routinely setting any formal homework. It may be however that a small task or tasks might be required to prepare for the next lesson or tie up loose ends of learning from the current lesson. If this is the case, then we would ask for your support in ensuring that these small tasks are done.

3. Length of time for 'Live lessons'

Your feedback was that the 'Live lesson' element of many lessons was going well beyond the intended 30 minutes, sometimes up to an hour. This was creating difficulties for some students in having enough time to follow through with the work set and was impinging on the break time before the next lesson.

In the light of this we have reiterated that the 'Live lesson' input should remain at 30 minutes but should not exceed more than 40 minutes to allow all students sufficient time to complete follow-up work.

4. Email feedback versus Teachers remaining in the 'Teams' meeting

There were varying opinions about the way that students could contact teachers if they needed anything clarified or explained. Some people felt email was good, others felt it was impersonal and would be better to be able to go back into the 'Team' meeting and speak to the teacher directly. Others felt that all students should return to the lesson for the last 5 or 10 minutes.

This was tricky as many of the opinions differed and implementing any one of these would be unrepresentative of the feedback.

Considering all the feedback we have agreed that teachers will remain in the 'Teams' meeting for about 10 minutes after the end of the 'Live lesson' input to be able to answer any questions about the task, to clarify any points from the teaching or to help with anything else. After that, the teacher will leave the meeting and we will revert to individual questions via email.

There were a number of other areas we received helpful comments about but those above were the most common ones mentioned. As a teaching team we spent a long time discussing what changes might make the most difference and we hope that the changes we have made will be positive ones.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized initials and a long horizontal stroke.

Mr I Bacon
Head of School