

Dear Parents/Carers

We are well into the second week of online learning and I hope it has been working for you! We have had several queries and I hope to address them in this email.

Pupils working at home

Firstly, can I talk about the amount of work we expect pupils to do. It is hard enough for most pupils to produce 5 solid hours of high quality work when they are at school, in lessons, with teachers explaining, clarifying, motivating and taking charge. So, please do not be hard on your children if they are not managing to do that amount now. The work we asked teachers to set for pupils in KS3 should take them approximately half the normal amount of time they spend in lessons. In other words, approximately 12-13 hours per week in total. Spread over 5 days this clearly means towards 3 hours per day. Is that enough? Yes, we think it is. That is not to say that any pupil cannot spend longer and explore things in their own way; we would encourage a whole range of other worthwhile activities to be enjoyed during this period. We do want pupils to continue to work, but we also want them to be able to take the opportunity to be creative, to relax, to spend time without pressure doing things that they really enjoy. If you find your child is taking significantly more time than what I have stated, please get them to stop. If they are spending more time than advised but doing so happily, please let them continue. Year 10 pupils should be doing more, but again the majority will struggle to manage 5 really productive hours.

We can never encourage them to read enough. Any opportunity to read books will be time incredibly well spent. I think they should be given household chores to do, and the chance should be taken for them to develop their own interests and independence. A family based approach to exercise is also something we recommend strongly. This is a period of enforced absence from school, and I hope all families and individual pupils, are able to find a way to embrace it, do some good work, keep active, enjoy some unpressured time and generally see it as an opportunity to recharge batteries in a way that doesn't normally present itself. The fact is this time will dent progress made by our pupils, and we will be ready to make this up as best we can upon our return. What we certainly do not want is for this time to become pressured and tense because of a feeling that school work should be intense and take up most of the day, every day.

If you are struggling to get all work done at home because of the technology involved, please look closely at the instructions you were sent in preparation for the closure. If that doesn't help, contact your child's tutor for advice. But, it is unrealistic for us to

think that every house will have exactly the technology it needs for pupils to complete every task perfectly. As long as you have the ability to log onto Office365 you will be able to see what work is to be attempted, as best it can be.

Having said all that, we do expect your children to do the work that has been set, especially as it should not take up too long. I will ask teachers to contact your children through emails to nudge them if work has not been 'handed in' online. If we identify pupils who seem to have done nowhere near enough work, I will ask teachers to alert you to this so that you can discuss it with your child and hold them accountable.

Easter

The next fortnight is the Easter 'holiday'. We do not expect teachers to set work for this time, and we do not expect pupils to do school work at this time. The school will open each morning should any children of identified Key Workers come in, and will then shut for the day if they do not. They will be supervised but not taught. As I have said previously, we do not want children in school unless their not being here would prevent you from going to work. This is to promote as much social distancing as possible, to keep us all safe. Only if this is the case should you send your child to school. If you need to send your child to school over the Easter period, and you are a Key worker, please could you email the school using the *office@reephamhigh.com* email address, no later than the day before, with 'CHILD ATTENDING SCHOOL' as the subject.

Refunds for trips and visits

All trips and visits this academic year are cancelled. We now need to claim for all money already paid to be returned to school, and we need to return this money to you. This will not be a particularly quick process but we will return money to you as soon as we possibly can, and I am currently in talks with the Synergy Trust Financial Executive on how we can do this most efficiently. We understand that many families could do with this money urgently. I will let you know once I know more.

Finally can I please reiterate an earlier point. It would appear that we are into this new arrangement for more than a short period of time. Subsequently we need to take a realistic approach to the amount of work we can reasonably expect teachers to set and mark, and pupils to do. We do not want to create pressure and tension, and do not want any pupils, parents or teachers to suffer from 'burn out'.

Wishing you all well,

Tim Gibbs

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