

3rd April 2020

RE: The Cottesloe School Update

Dear Parent / Carer

As we approach the end of the second week of school closure and the start of the Easter break I wanted to update you on our plans for continuing distance learning. During this time leaders, teachers, young people and parents are all trying to adjust to a new way of living and working.

For many schools and leaders, the primary concern at this stage is rightly the welfare and safety of students and teachers. The situation is dynamic and it has been difficult to make lasting plans. One of our primary goals has been to add value to the lives of young people in a situation that developed very rapidly.

Currently, staff have been setting work on ShowMyHomework (SMH) on a weekly basis. For a range of reasons, this is not an effective long term solution to distance learning. The resources, websites and activities teachers have made available to students have given them the opportunity to do some learning at home. Engagement with SMH has almost been 100% across the student body, this is testament to the resilience of our students. We have deliberately not jumped in and made significant changes in these first few weeks as I am mindful of the situation we have found ourselves in and tried not to overload students, parents and staff.

Summer Term timetable

After Easter all students will be following a new online timetable. This has been produced to provide some structure to the day which we feel will help students and families to set aside specific time to complete work on a daily basis. The timetable attached outlines the subjects that will be setting work on each day for each year group. We have also suggested other activities such as daily reading and physical activity that can be completed to create a wider experience.

We are not trying to replicate the school day, however as we move into the next phase of school closure I felt it is important we create some routine and clarity around our expectations. Students will be living and working in very different environments. Whereas some students may have good access to technology and an internet connection, in other households such resources may be shared among children, or possibly with adults who are using these for their own work commitments.

Moving to Google Classroom

After Easter, we are moving away from SMH and staff will be setting all work on Google Classroom.



Many subjects use the Google suite of resources already and we had planned to phase out SMH in the next academic year. Staff are being provided with resources and trained in using Google Classroom over the next 2 weeks. This will be a learning curve for staff and students so please bear with us while we implement this change.

We will also be creating and sharing self-help materials for parents and students so they can begin to interact with the platform during the Easter holidays as staff begin to set up their virtual classrooms. There are a wide range of video tutorials online should you and your child wish to begin exploring how it works. I have included a link to troubleshooting for students as a starting point.

<https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6315899>

I would encourage all parents to talk through this change with their children and monitor the completion of the work that has been set on a daily basis.

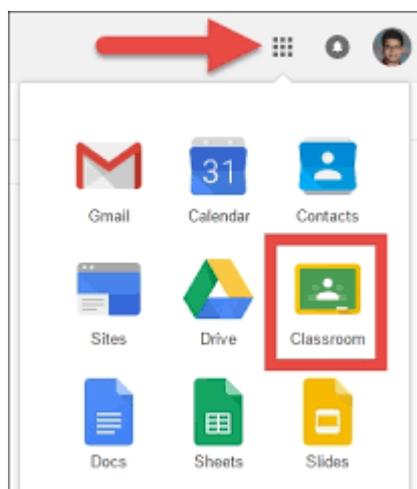
What is Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a free platform that all students have access to through their Cottesloe Google email account. Teachers create virtual classrooms for each of their groups and invite each student to be a member of the class. The platform enables teachers to post tasks, assignments, quizzes and links to a wide variety of documents and resources. Teachers are also able to directly communicate with students to provide support and feedback on specified tasks.

Work will be set for each task in the virtual classroom on the day it appears on their timetable.

The work set must be completed on the same day and submitted to teachers by 5pm so it can be checked, marked and feedback given where appropriate.

Students must login to their Cottesloe Gmail account and/or look at the notifications that come up on Google Classroom. The App for Google Classroom can be found in the Google Suite of icons.



The principle that children have a right to an education is one that I will always cherish and protect. These decisions have been made to ensure that we continue to provide education of the highest quality in the situation we find ourselves in. As such, it is appropriate that we continue to set learning activities for children at home, as well as those coming into school. However, the quantity, scope and quality of learning during this period may not be optimal. It is about doing the best we can in a difficult situation, balancing learning with an appreciation of the challenging context teachers and students find themselves in.

As per normal, we will not be setting work over the Easter holidays. Staff will be using this time to prepare their Google Classrooms. We have attached some suggested activities for you to consider over the Easter break that support our Health Relationships agenda. Students in Year 7, 8 and 9 also have access to our Challenge Opportunities Programme. This gives them ideas for a wide range of subject based activities that allow them to gain knowledge and experience in many ways beyond the classroom. I have included the link from our website below.

<https://www.cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk/admin/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Challenge%20Booklet%20Sept%202020.pdf>

We have taken great delight in reading your emails and looking at the photographs you have shared with us of your home learning and the experiences you are gaining. Please continue to share these stories and images with us to help keep the spirits of our school community up.

Stay safe. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Jones
Headteacher

