

Monday 11th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for your support and positive messages regarding the online learning, the critical worker provision and for the quality of our communication. This is not a position any of us wants to be in but you are a pragmatic, sensible, hard working and—the occasional WhatsApp uprising aside—a very understanding community. Home learning is a challenge, which is probably one of the reasons we have school: an institution for educating children. As a parent myself, I genuinely found running a school of over 420 children, 60 staff and hundreds of families far simpler than trying to ‘help/support/cajole/bribe/enthuse...’ my own daughters with their homework. My fall-back was threatening them with Mrs Smith (3S) who taught both of them. And that was only homework, not what you are doing: home learning. When we put our plans together, we do think about you, the children and our staff and try to find the most appropriate path for everyone. You have our support and respect.

The teachers have done a phenomenal job in putting together a very impressive ‘Continuation of Learning’ offer for all your year groups. This couldn't have been done without a significant amount of pre-planning by Mrs Payne who has led our use of Microsoft Teams and put together our Continuation Of Learning Strategy.

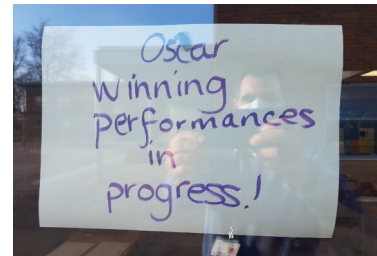
Thank you also to Mrs Hill for putting together the allocation for our critical worker children in less than 24 hours and for our support staff who are running #kingsleacares3.0, allowing the teachers to focus on the online learning.

I'm not going to go through the benefits and negatives of different sorts of online provision or what each school in Horsham is doing. I'm immensely proud of our online learning, and the use of Teams allows for the submitting and feedback of work—something we didn't have in the summer term. It also allows for much more effective communication between home and school, as evidenced over the last few days. We have had over 95% engagement from children with the online learning which is significantly higher than last year, so thank you for your support.

On the next page you will be able to read about our plans to further enhance our pastoral support.

Regards,

Alexis Conway and the Kingslea Team



Poppy Appeal

We raised £410.01 for the Royal British legion which is far more than we've ever raised before. Thank you.



Pastoral Care

We absolutely recognise the impact of the current lockdown on the children's emotional and social well-being. We have quickly put together the academic provision last week; now we are ready to add in our pastoral provision. From the week of Monday 18th January, each class will have a live class assembly every fortnight. In the alternate week, there will be a 5-minute 1:1 conversation between the class teacher and your child. We will use the same system as we did for parents evening so you will be able to book in your child's session. We recognise that one of the benefits of the pre-recorded teaching videos is to allow you to plan your day to suit you. The live class assembly will be at a set time each week, as will the afternoon reserved for the 1:1 conversations. One thing that is beyond our problem-solving ability is the speed of the internet around Horsham. We will do our best to ensure that this new element of provision is successful, including by having them later in the day when the internet seems better, and spreading year groups over the week; however, I am sure you can appreciate we are not responsible for the local infrastructure. More information to follow later in the week.

Continuation of Learning

Thank you for your questions, comments and understanding in the first three days of our continuation of learning provision. Like you, we are finding our feet with Microsoft Teams; we had our plan in place for this scenario but it is only when we put the plan into action that we can iron out the kinks along the way. Please find below some information which answers the most common questions we've received over the last few days.

- **Videos**—We are finding that Teams is slower between 9 and 11 each morning so streaming or downloading the videos will be easier outside of these times. That being said, if you are downloading videos, please remember to delete them after use as they may begin to fill up the memory on the device. We are improving how videos are named in the Feed this week. Please find attached an updated guide which includes how to download on iPads—the new information appears in blue on the guide.
- **Files**—With their Teams account, children have access to an online version of Word/Powerpoint etc. which can be used to complete work if needed. This is causing some confusion as it means there are two “Files” areas in Teams: the Files for the whole class/Team and the child's individual Files (OneDrive). The Team's Files section is always near the top of the interface and this is where the videos can be accessed easily with clear names.
- **Uploading work**—If you are using a device which has a camera or webcam, the easiest way to return work is to take a picture using the webcam/camera and upload this into the Assignment (click “add work” underneath the Assignment details). Children can complete work in their own “Files” section (OneDrive) and upload from there.
- **Feedback/“Returning” work**—As we have said before, children who submit work will receive at least one personalised comment on their work each week—you may have received a lot more than this in the first few days. In future, teachers may “return” work (the Teams word for “mark”) with no comment or add just a short comment or emoji to ensure your child knows their work has been received.
- **Deadlines**—We have put a 6pm deadline on the Assignments—this is to keep the assignments easy to track and in order on the Teams interface. This is not a hard deadline and work can be uploaded at any time before or after the deadline: the Assignments never close. Please do not worry if work is not uploaded before 6pm—it makes no difference to us, we appreciate anything and everything that is uploaded for us to view.

Positive Covid Case and isolation

Last week we had more members of staff having to isolate than in the whole of last term, we have also had two unconnected, positive Covid cases among Kingslea staff. We have designed our plans for online learning and critical worker provision to be able to be implemented at less than 100% staff capacity, but there may be times when we will have to make difficult choices as to what we can continue to provide if staffing levels fall significantly.

Critical Worker Care

Thank you to all our critical workers for all you are doing in your specific areas of work to ensure the community is safe, well and is able to access the essential services you are providing. I know that for some of you #Kingsleacares3.0 is the only form of childcare that you have, and we are here for you. Thank you also to those critical workers who have used childcare support from adults working from home, formed a childcare bubble or have limited their child's time in school to the minimum possible. Thank you also to those of you who may be ‘eligible’ for a place, e.g. if you are involved with the EU transition response, but have kept your child at home. This has meant we have not had to prioritise or ration places. However, we are running at the very limit of our capacity, with three times as many children attending than in the summer and if we have more staff unwell or isolating, we may have to prioritise or ration places.