



Update Letter 10-01-2021

Dear parents, carers and students

We have made it through the first week of Lockdown #3! Thank you so much for all your patience, hard work and support. We know that it is just as challenging for you as at home as it is for us in school with constantly changing guidance, expectations and a dangerous, highly transmissible virus that has no respect or regard for anyone. I hope that you and your families are well and that you all stay safe.

**National
lockdown:
stay at home**

There are a few updates to share as we adapt and adjust our in-school and our remote provision – both in terms of general support and support for learning.

1. Online learning

We are grateful for your feedback on our online learning provision during this first week of lockdown; most of the feedback has been very positive and where there have been issues, we will continue to provide support, adapt our practices in the light of your feedback and keep everything under constant review. For the moment, we will continue with our blended approach using a mix of Zoom lessons, Zoom catch-ups, pre-recorded videos (including some which are produced 'in-school' and some selected from nationally-available materials – eg. relevant Oak National Academy lessons, White Rose videos), narrated and self-directed PowerPoints, traditional worksheets and tasks. ICT lessons are also available at: holywellit.com. We believe that this blended approach provides more flexibility for families – particularly for families where students are sharing devices or where students have to share with parents/carers. Staff have been brilliant in creating their own video lessons and have embraced the challenge of using Zoom to teach lessons and to stay in contact with students. Some staff are fairly new to this and it is taking a while to adapt to this new way of teaching. Staff are also balancing their online commitments with teaching Critical Worker students in school. For support with passwords, please use the dedicated email address: helpit@holywellschool.co.uk. There is also the following webpage with school logins for doodle maths, kerboodle, ttrackstars, mymaths etc - <http://www.holywellit.com/passwords.html>.

Zoom lessons and Zoom catch ups

We do need your support if we are to continue with our Zoom provision. Whilst the majority of students have been an absolute joy to see during the calls, we have had some minor misbehaviour and some major disruption. We would be grateful if you could support and reinforce the Zoom protocols we have in place already:

- Never give out the link or passwords to people outside of your class/group/school.*
- You will need to be able to be seen to take part in the lesson so you need to use a device with a camera.*
- Make sure that you are suitably dressed and that the background is as neutral as possible.*
- If possible, arrange for a parent/carer to be with you (or around) during the meeting/lesson.*
- Sound is often best using headphones.*
- Log in with your name (ie. This should be the student's first name and family name NOT the parent's name).*



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead: Miss A Stewart

Assistant Headteacher: Mrs H Donnellan – Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo: Mrs J Davies

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g. Please note that all meetings will be recorded for staff training, monitoring and safeguarding purposes. Recordings will be deleted after 1 month if there are no safeguarding issues or behaviour issues which need to be addressed. Recordings are purely for staff training, monitoring and safety purposes and will not be broadcast or shared publicly.

From next week (and definitely from 18th January) the following will be strictly adhered to:

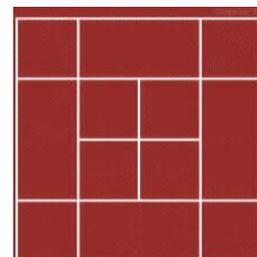
- Students who do not use a camera will not be allowed into the Zoom call. NB. The only exception to this is if this has been agreed beforehand with the teacher due to technical issues at home and a parent must agree to be present during the session.
- Students who do not display the correct name will not be allowed into the meeting.
- Once the meeting has started, late arrivals will only be admitted at the teacher's discretion (ie. usually this will be the case as long as the correct name is displayed and the video is active).
- Students must not use their mobile phones when in a Zoom call (eg. using chat functions in WhatsApp groups at the same time as being in the Zoom call) so we would be grateful if parents/carers could look after their child's other devices during the Zoom call.
- Students who misbehave will be removed from the Zoom call and, if the poor behaviour continues, this provision will be withdrawn.

To help with security, we will publish links to the Zoom meetings/lessons in an attached document which is only accessible to students in the group – they will no longer appear in the description of the classwork/homework section of Satchel One/Show My Homework. There will be serious consequences for any student caught sharing links outside of their group (eg. removal from this provision).

The way in which we are managing the teaching of English and Maths for Critical workers in school is that one of the English/Maths teachers will be delivering lessons for each Critical worker group in school for the whole week. This will mean that during that week, they will not be available to do Zoom lessons at those times for their own groups. They will try to have a 'check-in session at some point during the week and will still be available for message-support.

Whole-school events and challenges

There will be some whole-school events and challenges for everyone in the community (parents/carers and students!). Maths already have a weekly challenge – have a look at Mr Jones' introduction on Satchel One – can you work out how many squares are in this image?



There will also be some recorded assemblies which we will share with you all and starting from Monday, 11th January, we will have the Holywell Daily Challenge. There will also be some whole-school curriculum challenges.

Contacting school re: issues related to online learning

Please use the messaging facility on Satchel One to contact teachers/tutors directly; this helps us to manage the many queries and questions we receive rather than using a mix of messaging and emails. Please be aware that staff are not always able to reply immediately to messages or queries as they may be teaching Critical Workers, they may be involved in a meeting or they may be home-schooling their own children. If you have an urgent query, please call the school office and our support staff will be able to help you to either resolve the issue or locate a member of staff to deal with your enquiry.

We respectfully ask you treat our staff courteously when contacting school – which the vast majority of our parents/carers do. We appreciate the difficult situations families may be in (all of our staff and particularly our staff who are parents empathise with you all). We are aware of the stress Lockdown can generate – especially in our larger families where students are having to share equipment and where they have varying levels of self-motivation. We are all doing the best we can to support each other in these challenging and difficult times. Please note that aggressive contact is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

2. In-school provision for critical workers and vulnerable students

Please only use this facility if you have no alternative.

Students now have their timetables for the week and, although they may have some different teachers to usual, they must keep the focus on learning and treat everyone in school with kindness. Students will be following the same lessons in school as those online to ensure parity of experience and provision.

Due the small demand and need for on-site catering, our kitchen staff have been furloughed. AiP is providing a 'packed lunch' drop-off provision so students can order a packed lunch in the morning for lunchtime.

3. Asymptomatic Testing

We have set up a small testing facility in school to conduct weekly lateral-flow tests for staff and possibly as an alternative to close-contact self-isolation. A number of staff have had some basic training to manage and conduct these tests and our first trial run on Friday went well – all staff in the trial-run tested negative for the virus. We will also do some testing of Year 7 & 8 Critical worker students over the next few weeks. We were due to do a mass screening of Years 7 & 8 before they returned to school, but this is currently 'on hold' – it may be something we offer at the end of lockdown prior to students returning to school. NB. This testing is optional.



4. Support with technology and access to the internet

The Department for Education is working in partnership with mobile network operators to help schools support disadvantaged pupils in years 3 to 11 who rely on a mobile internet connection when their face-to-face education is disrupted by coronavirus (COVID-19).

Disadvantaged families may be able to benefit from free increases to their mobile data if they're a customer of any of the following networks:

- EE
- Three
- Sky Mobile
- SMARTY
- Tesco Mobile
- Virgin Mobile

More providers may join the scheme soon.

The amount of data available to families will vary by provider. Data will be increased until the end of July 2021. We are able to request these free mobile data increases for families during the spring and summer 2021 terms – please contact us if you would like further information.

We still have a small number of devices to loan families who do not have the technology at home to enable students to access our online provision. Please contact Mrs Donnellan via the school office if you need support and think you might be eligible.

DfE is also giving schools 4G wireless routers that we can lend to disadvantaged children during lockdown – again, please contact us if you need help and support with this.

5. Parents' Evenings

This term, we had planned to do Subject-based Parents' Evenings for all year groups – starting with Year 5 on 20th and 21st January. We are planning to go ahead with these ... remotely! Our usual online booking software has a video option which we are going to trial. It is all web-based so there will be no need to download apps and appointments are all managed online. The only thing to be aware of is that the video appointments have strict time limits and they will cut off after the specified time (5 minutes).

6. ... and finally ...

It is really easy to lose perspective during this difficult and challenging time. When I reflect back to last Sunday and on the events of the week, I am proud and grateful for the hard work, flexibility and ingenuity of the staff here at Holywell. What we have managed to achieve and all the changes we have had to put in place is quite remarkable. In addition, I constantly marvel at the flexibility and resilience of our students and I am always touched by their care and concern. I am humbled by the many kind words of support from you as parents/carers and I know that we will get through this pandemic together. In assemblies through the Autumn Term, I frequently referenced the beautiful book 'The Boy, The Mole, the Fox and the Horse' by artist Charles Mackesy. It is full of thoughtful lines and drawings and well-worth a read. This page resonated with me at the end of this first week:



There is a light in the darkness ... that light will shine through in our support for each other.

Please keep in touch and stay safe.

Mr Simpson

