



Bexley Grammar School
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A Specialist Language College and
IB World School
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5th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I have tried to communicate only when needed in recent weeks and to clarify what you are hearing in the media using information sent to headteachers directly from the DfE. Last night's announcement came earlier than I expected this week and brought in stronger measures than I had anticipated. I write again, therefore, to provide information about some important changes resulting from the new situation where your children will be engaged in virtual learning until half term.

From tomorrow, Wednesday 6th January, we will remove the staggered starts and finishes to the school day and simplify the school day with six 50 minute lessons, one 30 minute break (some of this may be taken occasionally for contact with the pastoral team/tutors) and one hour lunchtime for all. The fifth lesson of the day will be either period 5 or 6 on your child's timetable depending on his/her year group. Thus **the timing of the virtual school day** for the foreseeable future is as follows:

8:30 Period 1
9:20 Period 2
10:10 Break (30 mins)
10:40 Period 3
11:30 Period 4
12:20 Lunch (1 hour)
1:20 Period 5 (years 7, 8, 9 & 12) / Period 6 (years 10, 11 & 13)
2:10 Period 7
3:00 Finish

As explained yesterday, we will be expecting all students to follow their school timetables each day, now using these new timings. Students can expect to have a range of interactions with their teachers during their lessons to support their Virtual Learning, including email, live Google Meets (like Zoom), recorded instructions and Assignments set in Google Classroom. Advice and documents to support students and parents with Virtual Learning can be found [here on our website](#).

Students in years 11 and 13, in particular, may feel unsettled by the news that the summer GCSE and A level examinations will not go ahead as planned. The Secretary of State is working with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements for these and more details will be published in due course. Year 13 students know that alternative arrangements will now be made for A level students while no further alterations to those already made to their IB examination expectations have been announced; however, the reductions to IB exams already planned is far greater than that which had been made for A levels.

Clearly a UK announcement does not lead directly to an IB announcement but the IBO is fully aware of the various situations that arise in different countries, many of which have been more restrictive than we have experienced in the UK.

It is more important than ever for these examination year groups to remain focused in the next six weeks. All forms of ongoing assessments and coursework were used last summer to generate grades, not simply mock grades or report grades. Each piece of work completed during virtual learning provides evidence of achievement and should be treated as such. Last Spring, a number of students who thought that they could 'pull out the stops' at the last minute, got caught out. Ongoing assessment will underpin whatever system is used this summer. At the same time, may I remind all students that they are in a very strong position relative to other students in the country because our provision has suffered relatively little disruption in comparison with schools nationally.

I am awaiting further information regarding mass testing. If you have volunteered, please be patient while we find out what the next steps will be - thank you again for offering your time so generously. Similarly, the consent process for Covid-19 testing is likely to be postponed.

Please ensure that your child is aware of the contents of this letter, especially the new daily timetable from tomorrow.

Best wishes and good luck with your valuable part over the next six weeks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Elphick', written in a cursive style.

Steve Elphick