

Lincoln Castle Academy

30th April 2020

Dear LCA students and families

Thank you for embracing the Lincoln Castle Academy Virtual School. We are all in this together and looking at the different ways of being able to communicate and still feel like we are part of a school community and our class groups. As a result, we have had to bring to the forefront different ways of communicating that were often running alongside our existing teaching methods, but they were not as prominent as they have had to be over the last few weeks. With this in mind, I would like to remind you of the main ways to communicate with us during school closure:

If you have general enquiries, please email: enquiries@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk . You can follow our Facebook page for up to date information and messages or follow our website www.lincolncastleacademy.co.uk . You can also text or email through the Schoolcomms app. If you need support with any of the online platforms or app support, please email : appsupport@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk . To contact Heads of Year with achievements and news, email: HOY@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk

You can also use the 'old fashioned' method and telephone school on: 01522 529203. You can either leave a message or telephone between the hours of 9.00-11.00 am when there should be someone available to answer your call.

As a result of the school closure, three channels of communication either have become more important or are going to become more common are outlined in the information below:

School email

Students should only use school email to communicate with staff, rather than personal Hotmail or Gmail accounts, where possible. As always, students must only communicate with school staff through our school email and through the messaging function of SMHW. Teachers will put their email addresses on SMHW if they want students to email work to them.

Lincoln Castle Academy YouTube channel

Any videos created by Lincoln Castle Academy will be stored on our You Tube channel. You will be sent a link for the video either on SMHW or by email in order to view it.

Using ZOOM with students Summer 2020

I am sure you have all seen on the news or on social media that Zoom meetings have become increasingly popular during this crisis. **Zoom** is an on-line meeting hosting programme designed for multiple users to see and hear each other simultaneously. It can be used on a computer, smart phone or tablet. You can view it on a phone or a tablet so you do not need a laptop or desktop computer. It is best to go through the website and NOT the app. We **may** try to start using Zoom for tutor time or for lessons with students, depending on how long the school closures continue. **There is no obligation for students to join a Zoom meeting if they do not feel comfortable.** It is something that we have explored, but it may be that this is not a method that your child's teachers or form tutor are going to use.

On a Monday morning, we will let students know which lessons, if any, are going to be taught using Zoom this week via SMHW. We will also let you know if you are going to have a Virtual tutor time session in the same way. We will state the day and the time that the lesson starts.

We will email you the meeting code and password to your school email address. This is because SMHW can be seen by anyone, so this is for security. Once students receive the email with the instructions, they can then copy and paste the meeting number and password into the Zoom website. Zoom can be viewed on a phone, tablet, laptop or desktop, but the advice is not to download the app and to go through the web browser.

If students come to the meeting (lesson) 'room' early, they will see a screen saying that the host has not yet started the meeting. You will be told that you are in the 'Waiting Room' and then the teacher will start to let you in. Every lesson/session is being recorded, it is to safeguard you, the other students and the teacher.

If the internet cuts out on either side during the lesson, the room remains open and the lesson can be resumed when the internet connects again. We plan to limit the time to a maximum of 30 minutes with some follow up work once the meeting/lesson has finished.

During a Zoom lesson/session:

- Students, please access the Zoom session in a room where you can concentrate but where other members of your family will be aware that you are talking to school
- Please ensure that you are suitably dressed as both the teacher and the other students can see you - no pyjamas!
- Keep household members out of shot where possible
- All lessons must be recorded.
- We will keep a register of who has participated
- If students do not have audio, then at the bottom of the screen there is the option to send a 'thumbs up' to show understanding.
- There is also a comments section for those without a microphone to send questions or comments to the teacher
- The teacher has the option to remove a person from the meeting if they see fit.
- The school Code of Conduct still applies
- Some of the time will be taken to talk to the students and have a general wellbeing chat at the beginning
- We will be using flipped learning as a good way of setting up the sessions. This means that some work will be set for you to do before the Zoom lesson in many cases. We will use the Zoom lesson as a way of catching up, discussing the flipped learning, answering any questions and to help motivate students.
- At the end we will let students know the next time we plan to Zoom and that we will put this on SMHW with the joining information being sent to your email.
- Heads of Department will keep a log of Zoom meetings held each week, the teachers who hosted and participated and the students concerned.
- Enjoy it! It's fun and it keeps the connection between teachers, school and students going.

I hope this helps to clarify our position in terms of trying to maintain contact with students during this time of closure and we do think some virtual 'face-to-face' contact will help the return to school feel a little less daunting. That said, the first time of using Zoom could also feel very strange and the staff who have trialled it admit they felt a little apprehensive as it is outside our normal routines and comfort zone.

Kind regards

Mrs Laming