



8th January 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,

Home Learning from 11th January

As you are aware, we had prepared for the phased return of all students in January, but as a result of the 3rd nationwide lockdown announced on Monday 4th January, most students will now be educated from home for the duration of this half term. Only the children of critical workers and those assessed as vulnerable are eligible for in-school provision (Essential School Support, booked via enquiries@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk). With further disruption to students' education following a disrupted 2020, I share your concerns. We therefore intend to deliver our most ambitious home learning provision to date. This letter sets out our programme and requests parents' support to ensure a successful launch of our revised remote learning timetable from **8.30am on Monday 11th January**.

Our revised programme builds on the success of our previous remote education offer; your feedback was invaluable so thank you to those of you helped to shape our practice. During this next lengthy period out of school we intend to replicate most aspects of school life as best we can: teaching and learning, pastoral care and guidance, learning support and welfare and safeguarding provision.

The Government requires schools to monitor students' attendance at live lessons and to inform parents where concerns arise, ensuring all children are able to access their mandatory entitlement to education. Ahead of our launch on Monday, it is therefore important that we outline our expectations clearly. Whilst most students will be able to follow the attached '**Guide for Students**', others may require help from an adult to organise their day. We appreciate households are varied and families have their own unique pressures, particularly at this time. If you require support to make home learning successful, please get in touch. We may be able support with resources, IT, internet access as well as providing individual guidance to your child: enquiries@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk / 01522 529203.

This week the challenges of remote education have been well documented on social media; many fractious parents have been concerned about schools' expectations. Whilst we are determined that Lincoln Castle Academy students are not further disadvantaged following a year of considerable disruption, we do not endorse 100% online lessons. That would equate to 5 hours of screen time per day and that is not a healthy balance.

Students in all year groups can expect 50% of their timetable to be taught as 'live' lessons, with each specialist subject teacher determining which lessons will be 'live'. We believe that is a reasonable and realistic expectation and **request your support in ensuring your child's attendance**. The remaining 50% of your child's lessons will consist of independent work (most of it not reliant on computer access) set on SMHW. Your child should complete this work during their timetabled lesson; 5 hours work is

achievable as this mirrors the normal school day. Students in lower school (Years 7 and 8) should aim to complete 4 hours of work per day.

To avoid a bombardment of alerts, parents can turn off notifications for SMHW (Satchel One app) via phone settings. Within the app itself, notifications can be adjusted to suit individual preferences. If you do not make these changes, minor adjustments to tasks, teachers' posts, added attachments, resources and chats between your child and their teachers will ALL generate an alert. We are not able to prevent this happening as SMHW is an online platform so it is important to make the changes on your own device!

Vocational Exams

The Prime Minister's announcement on Monday evening heralded new challenges for schools, including confusion and heightened anxiety for students due to take vocational exams in the coming days. Over 200 Lincoln Castle Academy students were impacted. Consequently, staff have worked tirelessly to provide support and reassurance to those students, ensuring they are not disadvantaged by the Government's failure to provide a consistent approach to all qualifications.

LCA Test Centre

Despite these challenges, we end the week triumphant! Our Covid-19 Test Centre was officially opened on Tuesday 5th January and we have already carried out over 200 tests, including staff and students. I am delighted to report that we have had no confirmed cases of Covid-19 in school since our return. This additional control measure was made possible because of the time and tremendous dedication of LCA staff during the Christmas break.

Free School Meal Vouchers

For children remaining at home, but eligible for free school meals, food vouchers will be issued in due course, replacing the Morrisons food parcel previously offered. Children attending school who are eligible for free school meals will be provided with a packed lunch. All other students have the option to purchase a pre-ordered packed lunch or to bring lunch from home.

School Transport

The Local Authority have requested we share their booking system for school transport which closes on Wednesday 13th January 2021. If your child requires their usual transport in order to attend school, either because they are eligible to attend school or because they are sitting exams, please book a place: <https://goo.ly/3a47gt>

As we all work to endure continued and persistent challenges, I remain thankful to you for supporting our efforts. I recognise that home learning places greater demands on parents but believe our combined efforts will help to ensure your child is supported to achieve their potential.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Louise Laming
Headteacher