

14 April 2020



**TRURO
SCHOOL**

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Dear Parents

I am writing to share with you our Summer Term remote learning programme. We have collated a wealth of information from a variety of sources. This has included: feedback from parents, students and teachers; guidance from the most recent educational research; and the sharing of good practice from schools and colleagues in the UK and overseas. We are confident that our programme is a sustainable model that will provide our students with the pace and challenge to continue to make progress, the opportunity to explore new and exciting ways of learning, and crucially strike a balance between time spent 'live learning' on screen, and working independently to master knowledge, understanding and skills. We do not pretend that our programme is the finished product – it will evolve over time. We will continue to seek feedback from students and parents and make adaptations as we proceed.

1st – 3rd Year – a move to independent learning projects

In the 1st to 3rd Year all students will continue with their full timetable. Everest will be used by all teachers to set work and invite students to join live lessons through Teams as appropriate. Your feedback told us that working remotely places different demands on children and their families. To facilitate these challenges, each subject will be introducing independent learning projects. These projects will be part of your child's curriculum time this term, and will support our students to delve deeper into their subject, to develop independent learning skills, and take learning away from the screen. From our own experiences, and the research available, we know that it is not healthy or conducive to successful learning and well-being for children to be present on line, using technology for large amounts of time. We also acknowledge from parental feedback that prep is not required during this period of remote learning. There will, however, be supra-curricular opportunities offered by each subject for students wishing to explore aspects of their learning further.

Our expectation is that there will be a balance of teacher led and independent learning spread across our fortnightly timetable cycle as each teacher sees fit. Teaching and learning strategies suited to live lessons such as: retrieval of prior knowledge, introducing key concepts, modelling work, and checking for understanding through crafted questions can take place successfully, guided by teachers during interactive lessons. Students also need time to deepen their learning, applying subject matter to different questions and contexts. These aspects of learning may take place off line, with students given scaffolded support on set tasks to develop their independent learning skills, and sending work to their teacher for feedback. Teachers will of course still be available to respond to student queries that may arise.

4th Year and Lower Sixth – a balance between synchronous and asynchronous learning

In the 4th Year and Lower Sixth, students will continue with their full GCSE/ A Level timetable. Everest will be used by all teachers to set work and invite students to join live lessons through Teams as appropriate. Our remote learning model is supported by leading pedagogical thinkers such as Doug Lemov, author of *Teach Like a Champion* who recently insisted that 'good distance learning requires a combination of synchronous and asynchronous teaching'. Lemov's assertion is corroborated by Shaun Allison, author of *Making Every Lesson Count*, who opined that we need to be mindful of 'cognitive load theory and the limitations of working memory'. In practice, our approach to remote learning means that students will have

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regular 'live' contact points with all their teachers, whilst ensuring the balance of synchronous/ asynchronous learning is optimum for successful learning.

Our expectation is that the majority of individual timetabled lessons will include a live teaching aspect. At this stage, our 4th Year and Lower Sixth Students have developed sufficient independent learning skills to manage the demands of a remote learning curriculum. Each subject area will determine how their lessons will run and it is important to acknowledge that remote learning will look different for each subject area. We trust that our excellent Heads of Department and teachers will be facilitating the very best learning opportunities for their students, using the most pertinent learning model. Prep will not be set in addition to the lesson but students will be told which elements of the work to send to their teacher for marking and feedback.

Given the uncertainty of when we will return to school, we are currently reviewing our assessment procedures to plan for on-line assessment in the future. At this stage, the most important thing is that your child continues to engage with their learning through our remote learning programme.

5th Year and Upper Sixth - preparing for next steps

Dr Pope has sent communication about the transition from GCSE to A Level for our 5th Years, and Pre University work for our Upper Sixth. Departments will be completing and consolidating the GCSE and A level courses in the first two weeks of the summer term. From Monday 4th May we will transition to our Pre-A level and Pre-University programme. More details will follow in due course. Please be assured that we are firmly committed to supporting your child as they progress to the next stage of their academic studies.

Pastoral Care – staying connected

Mrs Ellison has worked alongside her Pastoral Team to develop a robust method of tracking student attendance. As we start the Summer Term, all pupils will continue to have that important daily contact with their tutor at 8.45 am. This is a time for the tutor to check everyone is okay, to pass on key messages and answer any questions. Please ensure your child is up and ready to log into the tutor Teams page for 8.45 am. At 9.05 am, the tutor period will end to enable pupils and teachers to be ready for the first lesson at 9.15 am. The tutor is your main point of contact in the summer term. They will be working alongside the Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team to provide the pastoral care that is so important at this difficult time.

Please contact your child's tutor, by email, if your child is not able to attend the registration or lessons for the day, giving the reason for the absence. The tutor will then record the absence for other teachers to see.

Similarly, if you have issues with your child being unable to complete a piece of work or have technical issues logging into an interactive lesson, please email their subject teacher. We want to do all we can to support remote learning and good communication between school and home is vital for success.

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Co-Curricular Provision – breadth and balance

In this remote learning environment it is as important as ever that students consider their physical and mental wellbeing and find time to be away from their computer screens. Staff have been busy providing a plethora of activities for students to access during Wednesday Afternoon Activities and as Co-curricular clubs. All students will be sent the links to the co-curricular Moodle page via their Wednesday afternoon activity slot on Everest. Whilst every family/child's needs will be different, as a guide we would suggest that pupils are taking part in 30 minutes of physical activity every day, one activity on a Wednesday afternoon, plus one activity as a lunchtime or afterschool club.

Mr Sanderson and his team have been busy organising a variety of physical challenges and tasks and all staff are contributing in some way from sock monkey making, crime solving puzzles, DT challenges, surfing to music, drama, outdoor pursuits and fitness-based tasks, as well as many more. Please encourage your child to look through the range of activities and to get involved with any that take their interest. Some activities will require a commitment, such as the hockey umpiring award and the sock monkey project, but others will allow your child to choose each week. You know your child best so please feel free to set your own limits on what is achievable within your home setting. If you have any family challenges or projects to share, please get in touch with Mrs Jobling (zj@truroschoo.com) as we would love to share them with our school community.

Balancing the demands of home learning with everyday life in these times is challenging for all. We understand that sometimes students may not be able to engage with their learning at the same time as everyone else, that technology may fail us, or that personal circumstances of student, parent or teacher may mean a change to plans. In planning for this remote learning programme, we have been mindful of all these challenges. Please be reassured that Truro School has only the very best interests in the wellbeing and learning of your child at its heart. Regardless of the challenges we face we will continue to support and nurture our community of wonderful young people.

If you would like to discuss the plans outlined here please contact Miss Mitchell elm@truroschoo.com or Dr Pope skp@truroschoo.com

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emma Mitchell'.

Emma Mitchell
Director of Teaching and Learning