



LGS Newsletter

17 April 2020



Dear Parents

Welcome to the fourth of our weekly newsletters during the school closure period.

We are now at the end of the Easter 'holiday' and I expect that for most of us it will have seemed little different because of the restrictions we are living under. However, I hope that your sons and daughters have been able to take a break from study and do some other things with the free time they will have had.

This newsletter contains information about our approach to home study/remote learning during the next few weeks - please read it carefully so you know what to expect from us. There are also updates and guidance for you as we all find our way through these challenging times.

My best wishes to you and your families for continued health and a positive outlook.

Mr J Constable - Headteacher

Reminder - summer term dates

We "start up" again for the summer term on Monday 20th April. The first half of the summer term runs until Friday 22nd May.

Reminder - critical worker provision

The Government's instruction is to stay at home if possible. However, schools are able to offer supervision for children of workers who are critical to the fight against COVID-19 coronavirus and who are unable to arrange appropriate childcare.

If you think your son or daughter will need supervision in school from 20th April, please contact us on school@lgs.slough.sch.uk.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work
- Stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Langley Grammar School
Reddington Drive
Langley
Berkshire SL3 7QS
01753 598300
school@lgs.slough.sch.uk

Please visit our website at

www.lgs.slough.sch.uk

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General updates

Arrangements for the start of term

Term begins on Monday 20th April.

- **Form tutors** have been asked to make contact with their form groups on Monday to 'check in' with them and find out how they are.
- **Subject teachers** will begin setting learning activities in line with the guidance shown elsewhere in this newsletter.
- **Mr Constable** will email all students with a short 'welcome back' message.

Please note that to give teachers time to begin the process of producing the centre assessed grades for Year 11, there will be minimal work set for Year 11 students for the first two weeks of the term.

Communicating with us

Throughout the school closure period, please contact us via email. The school@lgs.slough.sch.uk email address is monitored continually and your query will be forwarded to the most appropriate member of staff.

If your son/daughter is ill.....

Please email Mrs Collins in Student Support via school@lgs.slough.sch.uk to let her know. We will not be keeping any form of register during the school closure, but it will clearly be helpful for subject teachers to know if a student is unable to complete the learning activities set.

Similarly, if your family is experiencing any particular circumstances which would make it difficult for your son or daughter to complete work, please let us know in confidence.

Digital safety and wellbeing

The office of the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield OBE, has produced a digital safety and wellbeing kit for parents and a safety guide for children to help ensure they are safe, and their wellbeing is looked after while at home during the coronavirus outbreak when their screen time maybe higher than usual.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/digital-safety-and-wellbeing-kit/>

The digital safety and wellbeing kit provides useful tips and guidance to help protect your child on a range of issues including video calling, how to ensure your device and web browser are set up and updated correctly and tips regarding best practice with your username and passwords .

The kit also contains updated guidance around the Commissioner's digital 5 a day guide which looks at how to balance your child's screen time and improve their wellbeing.

EtonX courses

We now have the registration details for these. Soon after the start of term we will be contacting students in **Year 11** and **Year 12** with details of an online course for them to complete. We have initial access to one course per year groups but hope to have more in due course.



Update Teaching and learning

4 phase approach

We are finding it helpful to think of the school closure period in terms of four phases.

Phase 1	<i>End of the Spring term 23rd March to 3rd April</i>	Adaptation to home learning - getting used to new systems and processes.
Phase 2	<i>First half of the summer term 20 April to 22nd May</i>	Effective curriculum delivery and support for students in a sustainable and practical way.
Phase 3	<i>Second half of the summer term 1st June to school re-opening</i>	Continuation of Phase 2 for as long as restrictions remain, but with increasing emphasis on transition and preparation for return to school.
Phase 4	<i>Following school re-opening</i>	Recovery and re-establishing the school community. Finding the 'new normal' - what should we do differently in the future?

What did we learn from Phase 1?

Feedback received from students and parents showed that:

- ◆ A number of students, particularly in the lower years of the school, were finding it difficult to cope with the volume of work set. The various reasons for this included access to technology, personal organisation, specific family circumstances and additional responsibilities, for example caring for siblings.
- ◆ Some teachers had a rather optimistic view of how much work students could reasonably achieve when they are not in classroom setting.
- ◆ Some students would do everything that was required of them – and then want more.
- ◆ Students access to technology differed considerably. While all students in Year 8 and above have iPads, there are different levels of access to broadband across different families. Not all students have quiet places to work at home, and many are sharing work spaces and IT equipment with siblings and possibly also parents who are themselves working from home.

What will we do differently in Phase 2?

- We will set less compulsory work for students in the lower years of the school.
- Learning activities for all year groups will be set in the form of
 - ⇒ *You must do this.....*
 - ⇒ *If you have the time and interest, you could also do this.....*
- The amount of work set will be in proportion to the loading of the subject on the timetable but will vary according to the year group. For example, Years 7 and 8 should have compulsory learning activities equivalent to 50% of the subject timetable loading, and optional activities for a further 50%. This allows for the additional challenges of organisation for some students in those year groups.



Update Teaching and learning

Priorities for different year groups

The table below shows our priorities for each year group in Phase 2.

Year 7 & 8	<p><i>Deliver elements of the planned curriculum content in line with each subject's schemes of work.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on essential core knowledge that students will need to learn and recall in the future. • Try to ensure students still enjoy what they are doing, by setting core activities and wider learning that will maintain their interest and motivation in the subject.
Year 9	<p><i>For subjects where GCSE-level work has already started</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver elements of the planned curriculum in line with the subject schemes of work. • Focus on the essential core knowledge that students will need to learn and recall to remain on track in Year 10. <p><i>For subjects where GCSE-level work has not yet started</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver those remaining elements of the Year 9 planned curriculum which are key to the GCSE course in that subject.
Year 10	<p><i>The priority is to keep students on track in terms of developing their subject content knowledge. We will therefore.....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set learning activities that help students to acquire and consolidate knowledge – the curriculum may need to be re-ordered to postpone aspects of skill development and practical work to later in the course. • Set assessed work to judge how well students are learning the content and how to adapt the curriculum plan accordingly through the summer term and into Year 11.
Year 11	<p><i>No more work will be set in relation to awarding of centre-assessment GCSE grades. Activities set for Year 11 will instead focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of GCSE content in courses if needed. This may be needed for A Level preparation and some students may choose to sit the exam in the autumn or in summer 2021. • Consolidation of students' learning in the subjects they are taking forward to A Level study at LGS or elsewhere. • Further general and subject-specific work to be set by subject leaders and the Sixth Form team to support transition to Sixth Form.
Year 12	<p><i>The priority is to keep students on track in terms of developing their subject content knowledge. We will therefore....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set tasks that help students acquire knowledge – the curriculum may need to be re-ordered to postpone aspects of skill development and practical work to later in the course. • Set assessed work to judge how well students are learning the content and how to adapt the curriculum plan accordingly through the summer term and into Year 13. • Prepare students for internal examinations as soon as possible after 'normal' school resumes.



Update Teaching and learning

What about Year 13?

We will not be asking Year 13s to undertake any further work in respect of their centre assessment grades.

In some subjects, the course may not yet be quite finished, and there may still be some subject content to cover. Students will be asked to complete their study of this content as it may be required for university courses, or they may wish to take the examination in the autumn or next summer.

The Sixth Form leadership team may also recommend that students undertake particular activities to help them prepare for university study or apprenticeships next year. These will not be checked or assessed.

How much work will students be set?

We have asked subject teachers to follow the guidelines below:

Year 7, 8 & 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compulsory 'You must do....' learning activities which would take around 50% of the timetable loading• Suggested additional 'If you have the time and interest you could also do this....' activities for the other 50%.
Year 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compulsory 'You must do' learning activities to take around 75% of the timetable loading• Suggested additional 'If you have the time and interest, you could also do this....' activities for the other 25%.
Year 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compulsory 'You must do' learning activities equivalent to the full timetabled subject time, ie 4-5 hours per week.• Set additional 'If you have the time and interest, you could also do....' activities to a max of 3-4 hours per week per subject.

So if a student in Year 8 has four hours per week of a subject on their timetable, they should expect compulsory learning activities which should be taken about 2 hours to complete, and further suggested activities for them do which could take a further two hours.

Only the compulsory activities will be checked by teachers to see if they have been completed.

Will you be running video lessons?

During the closure period, distance learning is being delivered through a variety of platforms to provide continuity of education. We are aware that some schools have attempted to run virtual teaching through live lessons following the normal school timetable. This is not our approach in Phase 2. Not all students are able to access online learning in real time, and there are significant differences in students' home circumstances which make this difficult. There are also technical issues which make this form of learning less effective.

However, there is scope to use video on a limited basis with careful planning, for example by staff recording short videos explaining concepts. With older students, short sessions of live video work via Microsoft Teams could be used for direct instruction or student support. Students can also be supported through 'live' sessions on Teams where students can communicate through the chat facility. Some subjects may be experimenting with these methods although there is no specific expectation that they will do so.



Update

GCSE, AS & A Level grades

What is happening about GCSE, AS and A Level grades?

GCSE, AS and A Level examinations are cancelled for this summer. Instead, students who have been entered for these examinations will be awarded a grade based on an assessment of the grade they would have been *most likely to achieve* had exams gone ahead.

Just before the end of the summer term, Ofqual (the examinations regulator) published a guidance document which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcses-as-and-a-level-awarding-summer-2020>

Ofqual have produced a short explanatory video for students which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXuDOrtJY1Q>

What do schools have to do?

For every GCSE, AS and A level subject, we have to submit:

- a) a **centre assessment grade** for each student – our judgement about the grade that each student is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams,
- b) the **rank order** of students within each grade.

In addition, for GCSE English Language spoken language and A level biology, chemistry, physics practical work, exam boards will also collect centre-assessment grades for the separate endorsements.

This information will be submitted to the examination boards in early June.

How are we going to do this?

We are asking subject teams to work collaboratively to agree the rank order of students within their subject, and to propose the centre assessment grades.

Teachers and subject leaders will have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within the subject this year, and in previous years. They will consider each student's performance over the course of study and make a realistic judgement of the grade each student would have been *most likely to get* if they had taken their exam(s) and completed any non-exam assessment this summer.

Teachers will base these judgements on a range of evidence including

- performance in internal examinations and other assessments
- routine class and homework
- performance in practical subjects
- outcomes of any non-examined assessment
- their professional knowledge of each student's attitude to learning and trajectory of improvement.

The grades will be subject to quality assurance by the Senior Leadership Team, using a variety of data sources to ensure that the proposed grades align with what might be reasonably expected from each subject area, and for the student cohort as a whole. All grades will be signed off by the Headteacher before submission to the examination board.



Update

GCSE, AS & A Level grades

Are the school's proposed grades the ones students will actually get?

We know that the final grades awarded to students will be subject to statistical moderation by the examination boards. This is to ensure that they align with what might be expected based on the school's historic results and the prior attainment of this year's students.

There is currently a Department for Education consultation taking place on exactly how this process will work.

When will students get their grades?

The Secretary of State has confirmed that this year's **GCSE students** will get their results on **Thursday 20 August**, while those who are awaiting **AS and A level** results will get theirs on **Thursday 13 August**.

Will students be able to appeal the grades?

The Department for Education is running a consultation on this which closes at the end of April. We understand the proposal is that students would be able to appeal to the exam board through the school if they think there has been an administrative error (ie the school has supplied the wrong information to the exam board), or if they think the examination board had applied its standardisation procedure incorrectly.

Under current proposals, students would **not** be able to challenge the school's centre assessment grades.

Confidentiality

Schools have been told that they **must not** give students any information about their centre assessment grades or their position in the rank order. This information will remain confidential to the school. We would ask all students and parent to respect this, and not to ask for any information.

Will the school accept any other evidence of progress?

The centre assessment grades will be determined on the basis on the **evidence held by the school**, and the teachers' professional knowledge of the students' progress over time.

We will not be able to accept any evidence of progress other than assignments, examinations and routine work set and assessed within school.

Some reassurance.....

Our teachers know the students well. They also have a lot of experience of supporting students towards GCSE and A Level outcomes. They have a good knowledge of how students typically progress through the course, particularly the improvements which are typically seen between 'mock' examinations and the real ones a few months later. They will not be doing this alone and the process will be subject to strict quality assurance by the senior leadership team.