

LGS Headlines

8 January 2021



Dear Parents

Once again may I wish you all a very Happy New Year, trusting that although it seems dark at the moment, brighter times will lie ahead for all of us.

At the end of last term I wrote to you saying that plans for the start of the Spring term were uncertain in view of the tiered restrictions being imposed at the time. With the national lockdown in place, I guess the most positive thing to say is that at least we now have some certainty for the next few weeks....

This is the first edition of LGS Headlines for 2021 and my intention is to publish a similar newsletter on a weekly basis throughout the school closure period, as we did in the first lockdown back in the summer of 2020. The aim is to ensure you have updates on the situation as it evolves both nationally and locally, and to give you some idea of the provision we have in place for students and how they are responding to it.

The events of the last few weeks have taken us all by surprise. The high levels of infection seen as a result of the new coronavirus variant, and the resulting impact on the NHS, understandably cause us all significant anxiety. As the case levels have risen again, most of us now know personally of others who have contracted the virus. For many of you who have experienced illness in your families, this will have been difficult, unpleasant and worrying, but ultimately those affected have recovered well. However, we know that for some families within our community this has not been the case; you have had to contend with more serious illness, and in some cases bereavement. On behalf of the whole staff I would like to extend our sincere sympathy to those of you who are in this position.

Please take time to read the information in this newsletter carefully. You may be familiar with some of it already, but I hope that overall it gives you a helpful picture of how we are supporting your sons and daughters. We are not always going to get everything 100% right as we move through this next stage; our staff are also having to deal with illness, their own responsibilities towards their children and dependent relatives and in many cases the inevitable restrictions of working from home. However, we will be doing the very best we can and I would like to thank you for your ongoing support.

With my best wishes to you and your families.

Mr J Constable - Headteacher

The best way to contact us during the school closure period is to email school@lgs.slough.sch.uk.

Your query will be passed on to the most appropriate member of staff.

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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Welcome to new staff...

At the start of this new term we have been joined by one new member of staff.

Mrs Lisa Assari is an experienced science teacher who has joined us on a part-time contract. Initially she will be taking many of the Science classes who were impacted by the sudden staff absence in the second half of last term.

We are sure you will join us in wishing Mrs Assari well as she joins this staff under these unusual circumstances.

Reporting student illness

As students are now learning remotely, and are expected to join Teams lessons following the school timetable, it is important that we know if any students are unwell.

Please follow the normal procedures to report your son or daughter as unwell - call the school on 01753 598300 and follow the appropriate option to report an absence, or email Student Support via school@lqs.slough.sch.uk.

We will be monitoring student absence from online lessons, and will follow this up with parents to check that all is well with the student or their family.

Safeguarding

During the school closure we still have the same duty to ensure that students are safe and to promote their physical and mental wellbeing as we would if they were in school. We know that children may react to the coronavirus situation in different ways, and for some this may be a very anxious time. We are here to help and support parents as well as students if they have concerns about their sons or daughters.

Parents with any concerns or worries can email the safeguarding team in confidence via safeguarding@lqs.slough.sch and a member of the team will contact them as soon as possible.

Virtual PTCs

As many parents will be aware, we ran PTCs and pastoral reviews last term using the SchoolCloud software. This was generally been a positive experience, convenient for parents and allowing staff to conduct conversations in a more confidential way, and parents to make appointments at more convenient times.



Our current intention is to continue all PTCs in this way this term and in the longer term we would be interested in parents views on whether this format should be retained when the pandemic is over.

Are you still rolling out Covid testing?

Before Christmas the Government has announced two mass Covid testing programmes to be rolled out in schools in January, using the lateral flow test technology which provides results in a short time.

- ⇒ A mass **screening programme** to detect positive Covid-19 cases at the start of term.
- ⇒ An ongoing programme of **in-school testing** where students are identified as **close contacts** of a positive case.

The testing kits and associated equipment have arrived in school and we have set up our 'testing centre'. The current plan is to offer weekly testing to staff who are in school, and to roll out the mass testing of students when students return into school later this term.



Impact of the national school closure

What is happening in schools during the national lockdown?

The Government's current position is that during the period of national lockdown, schools can allow only vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers to attend.

All other children and young people should **not** attend and should learn remotely until February half term. The Government has set out its expectations for remote learning, aiming to ensure that the impact of the school closure on children's educational progress is minimised.

Critical worker provision

Schools are required to make provision for supervision of children of critical workers where this cannot be provided at home.

Critical workers are parents whose work is vital to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.

DfE guidance is that parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.

However, children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required.

If any parent requires critical worker supervision for their son or daughter during the school closure period they should contact Mrs Dobbs, Assistant Headteacher, via school@lgs.slough.sch.uk.

What about free school meals?

Schools are required to continue to make provision for children who would normally receive free school meals. This could take the form of food parcels, meals for those attending school, or food vouchers.

We think the best way to continue to support those families whose children are entitled to free school meals is to use food vouchers. The Government is promising a national scheme but in the mean time we will continue to use our own voucher scheme which families involved will be familiar with.

Mrs Dobbs, Assistant Headteacher, will contact any families entitled to free school meals with further details. Parents with any questions or concerns should contact her via school@lgs.slough.sch.uk.

What is happening with GCSE and A Levels?

The Government has confirmed that the summer 2021 GCSE, AS and A Level examinations will **not** take place.

Year 11, 12 & 13 students who are entered for these qualifications this year will receive grades, but these will be determined by a process of **teacher assessment**.

We expect aspects of this process to be similar to that used last summer, with schools responsible for submitting 'Centre Assessment Grades' to the examination boards.

At this stage we do not know any more than this.

The qualifications regulator Ofqual will be launching a consultation next week; we expect this will give us some further information about the possible options. However, we are unlikely to have real clarity for several weeks as to how grades will be awarded.

We recognise how unsettling this is for students in Years 11, 12 and 13. It is important that they continue to engage fully with their learning, as this will help their teachers to make the best possible judgements about their progress.

It is also essential that students focus on developing their own knowledge and understanding of the subject content in their courses; for the great majority this will be essential as a foundation for the next stage in their education, for example A Level study or degree courses.

When we have further information to share about the process of awarding grades, we will share this with students and parents.



Remote learning during school closure

What is the Government's expectation?

The Department for Education has set out clear guidelines on remote learning for this period of school closure. There is an expectation that remote learning should be equal in length to the core learning hours that students would have if they were in school. For secondary school, this should be a minimum of 5 hours per day.

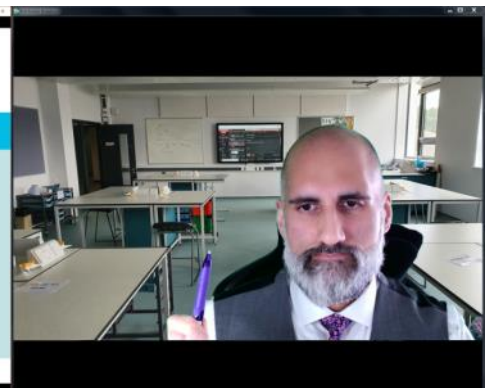
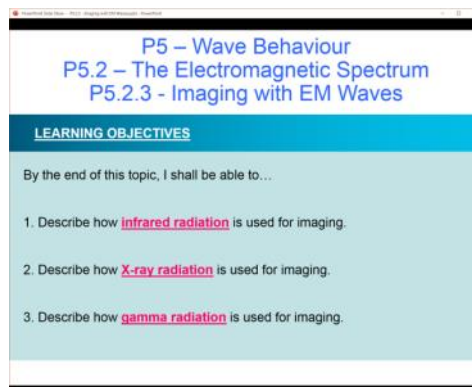
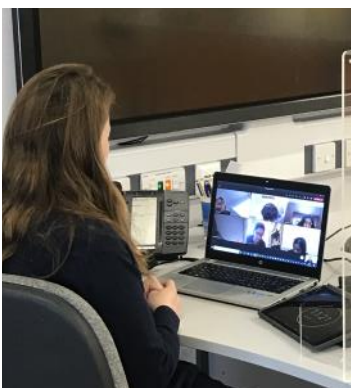
What is our remote learning provision during school closure?

We are following the normal school timetable. Students are expected to join registration with their form tutors and each of their lessons using Microsoft Teams.

Within each lesson, teachers will set a variety of activities, use recordings or deliver new subject content 'live'. Student may need to listen to the teacher, make contributions to the whole class just as they would in school, or to work independently on tasks.

Teachers will use a variety of ways of presenting, including direct talk, use of videos and PowerPoint presentations, and quiz-type response software such as Kahoot. Staff who are working in school may use the Clevertouch screens in classrooms.

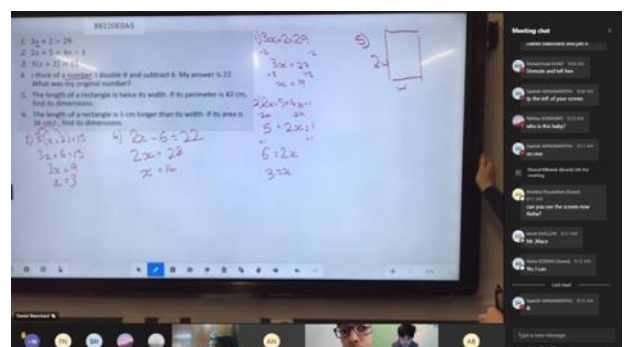
A register of attendance at online lessons will be kept and absence will be notified and followed up.



How will teachers assess learning?

During each online lesson, teachers will be assessing students' learning in a number of ways, in order to judge how to proceed in the lesson and the level to which students have understood the concepts. This is known as 'formative' assessment and may involve the use of direct questioning, quizzes (such as Kahoot or Socrative), virtual mini-whiteboards, or other software tools.

Assessment of students learning at the end of topics (known as 'summative' assessment) will be carried out in a variety of different ways depending on the subject and the year group.



We will update you at a later stage on how we will be managing other whole-year groups forms of assessment.

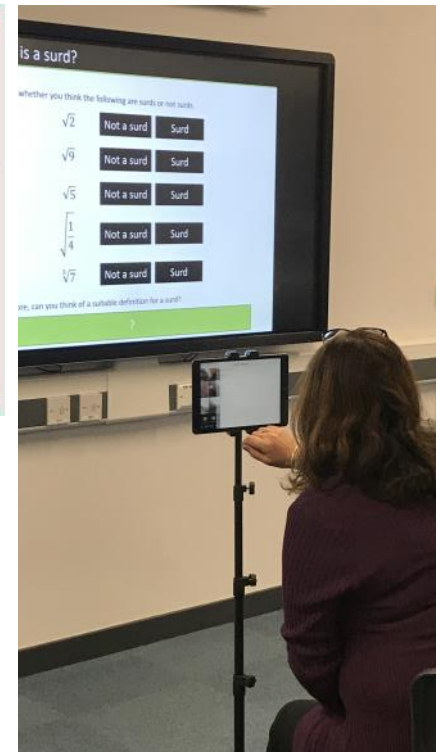
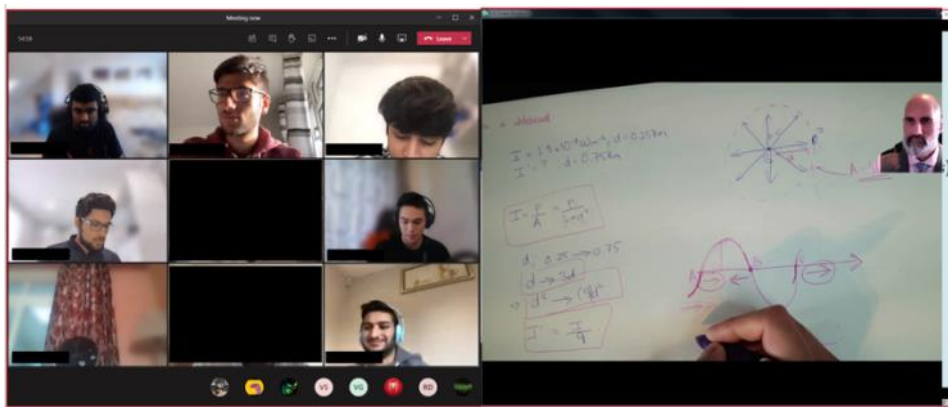


Remote learning during school closure

What are our expectations for students?

We have set out a number of expectations for students, as follows:

- ⇒ So long as they are well, they are expected to be online and to join the relevant Teams meeting at the beginning of every form period and the beginning of every lesson on every day. They should look out for invites from their teachers. If they are unwell and unable to engage in online learning, please contact the school in the normal way so teachers know not to expect them.
- ⇒ There will be times when they will not receive an invite to a live lesson (for example, if their normal class teacher is unwell or otherwise unable to teach them). In these cases they should check ClassCharts for cover work.
- ⇒ Students must be up, out of bed and properly dressed for registration at 8.20am every morning. They do not need to wear school uniform but should not be in pyjamas!
- ⇒ Teachers will be monitoring behavior and attitude to learning during live lessons. Impeccable standards of behaviour and full engagement in the learning activities is expected. Teachers will be again be using ClassCharts to notify tutors, phase leaders and parents if they have concerns.



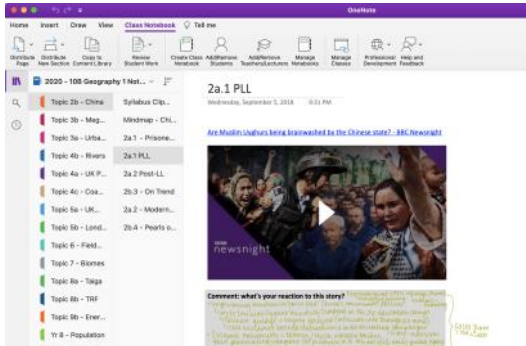
- ⇒ students should have their cameras **on** during live sessions to facilitate interaction but should blur their backgrounds or use a virtual background.
- ⇒ Students should work hard to complete the work set in lessons, which will, as far as possible, mirror what they would have done had they been in school
- ⇒ Teachers may set additional homework tasks on ClassCharts, which should be completed outside of the normal school day. Students should check ClassCharts every day so they can see the work teachers have set and by when it needs to be completed.



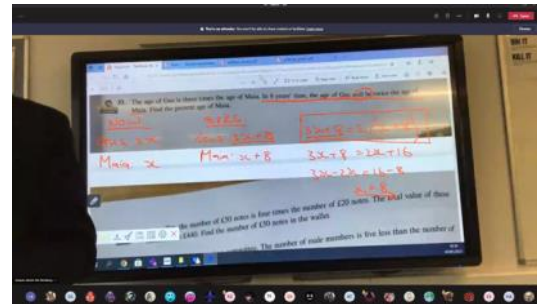


Remote learning during school closure

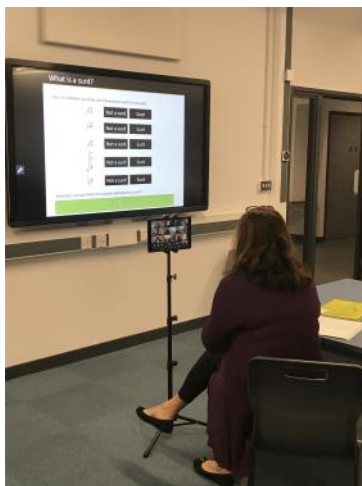
Some comments from our staff this week.....



“Great work from year 10 Geography today, reflecting on the Uighur community in China. OneNote is helping lots of teachers monitor student work in real time. iPad use means student don’t lose out on handwriting skills during remote education”



“Year 7 #LGSCaring students have adapted superbly to remote learning – teachers are blending @Clevvertouch, @AppleEdu iPad, and @MSTeams amongst other technology to both teach check their understanding as we go!”



“I have just had a year 7 parent on the phone..... went to great lengths to say how much she valued the provision for her son for remote learning and how much he enjoys interaction with other students and staff.”

“We’ve welcomed back students online yesterday and today – students have really impressed us with their online ‘etiquette’ - muting, raising hands, speaking boldly.”

“Year 13 psychology students used interactive whiteboards to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using medication to treat schizophrenia.... This was the first time I had used interactive whiteboards online - it worked very well and students were all able to share ideas effectively and talk about them to the whole class.”

“Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 have shown just how mature they can be. Attendance has been excellent to the on-line lessons and they are taking all the recent developments in their stride. We continue to work through the content of the specifications and students are responding well. It has been really nice ‘seeing’ them again!”

“At the start of this term (this week) Yr 11 Business students have been presenting on Microsoft Teams their marketing work on a cereal product. The brief said that I had invented a new multigrain cereal and that they were tasked with developing a marketing strategy to sell my new product. They spent a lesson in “break out” rooms planning and working on their strategy, then they were to come to my “board room” (aka Microsoft Teams) and make a pitch on why I should pick them over the other marketing companies (the other class groups).”



And from a parent.....

“Thank you to all the LGS staff for doing an amazing job, under such testing circumstances.”