



BLACKMINSTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Acting Headteacher: Ms Linda McQuone BSc(Hons), MA(Ed), PGCE, NPQH, MCCT

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Dear parents and carers,

It seems like such a lot has happened in the last week - the Christmas holidays seem a very long time ago!

It was lovely to see Year 6 students on Monday, although we've been terribly disappointed to have to close to all except a few children since then.

We've been delighted and impressed by the resilience and determination shown by our students, and just how well they've settled to remote learning. We're getting really impressive work completed at home, and we're confident that students, families and school can work together to ensure that education continues as well as possible until we're able to be together again.

We've had feedback from students and parents that the pink box "flexible tasks" on Show My Homework aren't very easy to use. We've looked at this (students' and parents' interfaces look different from the staff one) and we tend to agree! We've therefore made some changes to the way we are going to set remote work from Monday 11th January. From then, all work set will appear on the correct day (according to each students' timetable) and it will appear in a red box as "Classwork". Tests and quizzes will appear in their own colours, but will also appear on the day they are set. We'll send out more detailed instructions on Monday, but we hope that this will reduce some of the confusion around remote learning.

We've had lots of questions from parents and carers this week, so I thought it might be helpful to compile this list of FAQs.

We're very confused about remote learning!

As from Monday 11th January, all work will appear on SMHW on the correct day, and will be shown as "classwork", "Test" or "quiz". More detailed instructions will be sent out on Monday 11th January. Students should also be reading each day for at least 20 minutes - Accelerated Reader is still running!

How can my child submit work?

This will be easier to do through SMHW after the changes next week. In addition, children can email teachers, message through SMHW, send photos... whatever works best for them!





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How will work get marked?

Teachers will be providing feedback on work just as we do in more normal times. This won't be every piece of work, but will be regular and will give your child targets for how to improve. Feedback might be sent by email, SMHW message, it might be automatically generated by quizzes on line - we'll use a variety of methods to suit different subjects and pieces of work.

What if my child needs help?

Contact the teacher. Teachers are working from home, and are available to answer questions and provide help when necessary. Don't feel like you're bothering us - we're here to help!

I just feel overwhelmed with it all...

Give us a call or drop an email to your child's tutor. We're here and keen to support you as much as we can.

I haven't got the resources!

Contact us, and we'll offer whatever we can.

Are you doing live lessons?

When we surveyed parents and carers in September, we found that lots of families don't have lots of internet access, or that they will be working from home themselves, or that more than one child will be sharing a computer. It's important that the remote learning we provide is flexible so that it fits in around all of these things, and that it's manageable for parents who might be working at home themselves. That's why our remote learning package is as flexible as possible. Having said that, we know that social contact with teachers and classmates is important for children, so we are planning to introduce some live sessions with tutor groups next week - watch out for emails telling your child how to join in.

Do we have to stick to the timetable?

No. Work is set according to the timetable so that children can manage their work, but if your child wants to do the lessons in a different order or at a different time of day that's completely fine.

We can't log in to Accelerated Reader

Use the link that is posted in SMHW - that will get you in to the school's account. If you still have problems, please contact cbaldwin@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk





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Can I send my child to school?

The reason that schools are closed to most students is to reduce contacts and therefore break transmission of coronavirus. We have rigorous risk assessments in place and school is as safe as possible, but children who can stay at home and avoid mixing with others are less likely to catch or transmit COVID-19. We are open for vulnerable children and to provide child care for critical workers who need to be at work and who therefore cannot supervise their child's remote education, and we're proud and delighted to provide this service, but it's important to keep the numbers of staff and children on site as low as possible. If, however, you would like to discuss your child's attendance at school, please do contact us.

If you have any questions, or any comments or suggestions, please do contact us at school. You may also like to follow us on Facebook, where you will find updates, news and celebrations: even through these strange and difficult times our students and our school community has much to be proud of.

We're all in this together.

Kind regards,

Linda McQuone
Acting Headteacher

