

29 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

This week we have all heard the news that children will not be returning to school after February Half Term. We only have the same details as were announced by the Prime Minister and as soon as we have any new information, we will be in contact.

I would like to take this opportunity to say what a fantastic job you, our parents, are doing in ensuring that your children are online and ready to learn. Attendance to online lessons remains exceptionally high, with still only single figures on any given day of students who don't log onto Teams. Your children should continue to ensure that they are punctual to lessons (the vast majority are), as letting students into the lesson 5, 10, 15 minutes after it starts can be disruptive and your child misses out on the all-important lesson set-up and introduction to the learning expected.

Donating Laptops

There has been a lot in the news about donating used laptops to schools. This is a great scheme, and wonderful that so many individuals and businesses are being so generous. A local presenter did say that you can drop them off at your local school for them to process. This isn't the case. All donated laptops will need to be professionally wiped and set up and the link below shows where you can drop off laptops locally if you wish to donate:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5SqHJMTKZx5sYhltXJvB1Q/give-a-laptop>

Specifically for Year 11 Students

Year 11 students should have applied to their chosen sixth form or college. If you need any assistance, please contact Mrs Eady - keady@stourvalley.org

The consultation for how this year's GCSE grades will be awarded closes today. If you haven't yet given your view and your wish to, the link is here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/8BYI4T/>

Some notices to parents about activities and resources needed for practical lessons

Food Technology

Mrs Iannone has begun to offer practical cooking lessons to students who are either currently in the Food Technology rotation or studying GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition.

These take the form of videos that she is producing in collaboration with Mrs King our technician. She is sharing these videos, along with carefully selected recipes, with students via Teams, at the beginning of their timetabled double Food Technology lesson.

She is mindful of the current situation and restrictions surrounding food shopping, parents working from home or students being unsupervised. With this in mind- she would like to emphasise that these lessons are optional. Students are reminded that they must not participate if they are unsupervised at home. They must not use knives or cookers unattended. An alternative lesson is also provided if they are unable to participate.

Where possible she will give students two weeks prior warning, to enable you to purchase the ingredients they will require for that particular lesson. Please could we ask that you check with your child to ensure they are passing on the message so that you have as much time as possible to prepare.

Those students who have already been engaging in these lessons have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a practical activity and we have been sent some fabulous pictures of their creations. Well done to them all!



Design and Technology

As a part of remote Design and Technology lessons we are really keen to get students involved in practical style lessons at home. We ask that students begin to collect various clean materials, particularly card from old packaging, corrugated card boxes, plastic tubs, toilet tubes etc, saving items from the doom of the recycle bin, as they will come in very handy.

Descriptions of DT lessons on Teams will explain what resources are required for each lesson, and this could also include scissors, glue (Pritt sticks will be fine), tape and any other stationary fasteners that you might happen to have in your homes. They will not always be essential but having a set of resources & equipment will definitely make lessons more interesting. It will help to get students away from those screens and onto something productive and creative yet manageable.

Dance

A number of students from year 7-11 are currently working on an extra-curricular dance project, showing their strength and resilience through lockdown. The videos have been flooding in and are currently being edited. Keep a look out for the full lockdown dance video that will be available in the next couple of weeks.

Message from Mr Craig

We are all spending a lot more time in front of screens right now, so I thought I would let you know about the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. This is an event that the RSPB runs every year and asks people who sign up to spend 1 hour during the weekend of the 29th-31st January to watch and record all the birds that come into their garden.

More details and how to sign up can be found here. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/> I have signed myself up so I will be sitting down with my kids to complete it, so why not join in and reconnect with nature.

Big Garden Birdwatch | Join the fun - The RSPB

The dates are in! Join us for Big Garden Birdwatch 29 - 31 January 2021. Find out more www.rspb.org.uk

And finally

A reminder that next week is Children's Mental Health week. There will be activities and advice posted in the Teams year group channels.

Wishing you all a good weekend and week ahead

With kind regards
Rachel Kelly
Headteacher

