Remote Learning Programme
Year 12 - Summer Term 2020

Bedford Modern School.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE HEADMASTER

During the past few weeks, schools and teachers have been forced to completely re-think how they approach education. The challenges of remote learning for students, staff and families are significant. At home, families are trying to balance working from home while setting up workstations, supporting children in settling into (and sticking to!) a routine, and answering questions on topics that they may have studied many, many years ago (thank goodness for the internet). Students are struggling with the lack of social contact whether it be friends or teachers, they are being asked to be more independent and to work from a screen for a large part of the day.

To address this, we have rolled out a new virtual learning environment, linked to our information database and timetabling software. Staff have had to learn new systems and develop completely new approaches to teaching. All of this in a matter of days and weeks. More than 50 staff collaborated to create a new timetable and associated polices and we recently held a virtual INSET day with more than 100 staff receiving detailed training. I am thrilled that we have made such remarkable progress in a short amount of time and I want to thank all the staff who worked over the Easter holidays to make this possible.

However, I do want to be clear on some important expectations:

- Different teachers will use different approaches much like they would in a normal classroom. This may be due to levels of ICT experience or simply the fact that they have adopted a different method of delivery.

- Different age groups may have different approaches; for example it is far easier to undertake real-time lessons with smaller A Level classes than with bigger classes in the younger year groups.

- Some students will adapt to this easily while others will take time.

- Like many families, a number of teachers are juggling working from home with their own childcare and support from others in their household.

- Different schools will adopt different approaches and solutions; there is no single solution.

There will be teething problems and the whole community will take time to adapt. We will all make mistakes. Please provide us with feedback, but also be patient as we all continue to learn as the system evolves.

It is my hope that we can re-open before the summer holidays. In the meantime we will continue to support you all, students and families, during the coming weeks.

Alex Tate
Headmaster

Key Principles and Terminology

In a virtual learning environment, it is impossible to continue with the usual timetables and methods of teaching which were in place while we were physically at school.

The team here at BMS have spent time investigating the best features of a remote curriculum including talking to colleagues in Italy and Hong Kong. The timetable needs to have flexibility for families who may be sharing devices or have limited bandwidth. Students will also struggle to focus on live video all day long with limited benefit.

We have designed a new timetable to reflect these changing circumstances taking into account body clock differences between 11 and 18 year olds. The learning programme will be accessible to all students including those with additional needs and we are setting realistic expectations of what can be taught and learned remotely right from the beginning, accepting that staff and students will not be as productive as they would be under normal circumstances. We will continue to offer an adapted version of pastoral oversight, PSHEE provision, exercise, co-curricular activities as well as the academic curriculum

Throughout this document we refer to two types of lessons: real-time and self-guided. These are also known as synchronous and asynchronous respectively. More explanation of this appears in the section on Teaching Methods.

Should we return to school after the May half term, we will revert to our normal timetable with students in Years 11 and 13 on leave as would have been expected during the latter part of the summer term.

The New Timetable

It has been proved that students and teachers benefit from a variety of activities and from a mixture of synchronous (or real-time) lessons and asynchronous (or self-guided) lessons. Our new timetable allows for exactly this. Lessons are longer, to allow for both students and teachers to overcome any technological problems at the beginning of each session. Students will have daily real-time lessons interspersed with self-guided lessons.

The former may take the form of live audio, video or the use of chat forums. The latter is work that has already been set and may involve pre-recorded presentations and other mechanisms. In addition to this we have tried to include set times for exercise, co-curricular and interaction with the pastoral team.

The timetables only show the real-time lessons. It is not realistic, or healthy, to expect all lessons to be delivered like this, so there will be directed work outside of the actual lessons detailed. This allows a certain amount of autonomy but also students can work with their parents and tutors to determine what suits them and their household best.

The Year 12 tutors will go through the timetables with the students in their tutorials at 11am on the first day of term and will remind them of the importance of keeping safe on-line and any associated behaviour principles.

Key Points

- Six hour-long periods which all start on the hour or half hour
- Lunch is scheduled for after Period 3 as it would be too late if we kept this after Period 4 as usual
- We have retained the two-week timetable for flexibility
- Year 12 students will have real-time lessons and these will fall in periods 5 and 6 depending on the subjects they take.
- There are other planned times when students are expected to do asynchronous (self-guided) work and should be encouraged to plan their asynchronous lessons as they would build their own revision timetable.
- Sport, co-curricular and pastoral times are also timetabled.

Teaching Methods

At the start of each week, or cycle (depending on lesson frequency) students will receive a clear set of instructions for their self-guided learning along with access to all the supporting resources. This will be distributed through MS Teams, in which your child will have a Team for every class they belong to. The requirements for this work should be absolutely clear, but if in any doubt students can post questions on MS Teams and the teacher will respond with clarification. Details of the real-time lesson timings will also be in these instructions and in an amended student timetable showing just the real time lessons for each subject. These real-time lessons will therefore provide a regular structure around which the self-guided work can be planned. There will be no homework set in addition to this regular package of work.

Real-time lessons will generally be one in three sessions per subject, but this does depend on the year group and subject. Real-time lessons will be managed using MS Teams so it is essential that students are logged in, with Teams open ready to participate at the time indicated in their timetable. What these lessons actually look like will vary from a fairly simple format where the teacher directs work and manages questions using the message board in Teams (posts) through to a completely interactive lesson where the teacher is live streaming a lesson and asking and responding to questions throughout. In the early days it is more likely to be the former as staff and students get to grips with this new way of working.

Self-guided lessons will include activities such as reading course materials, watching video clips, completing a prerecorded lesson, conducting research, completing assignments and low stakes tests. Although students can do this work at their own pace the class teacher will still be monitoring MS Teams regularly and will respond to student questions (within 24 hours) and may even post further information or clarification, or perhaps messages of encouragement, thus maintaining the all-important 'teacher presence'. Teachers will also be reviewing student work at regular intervals and providing developmental feedback.

Mr Donoghue (Head of Year 7) has developed a very helpful tutorial to help students understand how to use MS Teams. It can be viewed here, with password 'BMS'.

Mr McIntosh (Teacher of History) has created a similar tutorial on the use of Teams and OneNote, which can be viewed here, with password 'bms2020'. He has also created a guide to using OneNote, which can be viewed here.

We strongly recommend that everyone accesses these resources.

Summary

- The majority of lessons are **self-guided**. Students are working independently at their own pace, completing set activities, but they can ask for help if they need it.

- There are two types of **real-time** lessons:

   Live – teacher streams on video or audio

   Interactive – teacher is active in the chat function or 'looking over the shoulder' in One Note

- Some subjects are suited to being taught via live lessons and others suit project-based tasks better.

- The key platforms staff and students will be using are found in Microsoft Office 365 and include Word, Teams, OneNote, Class Notebook, MS Forms and Powerpoint. Additional platforms such as Loom may also be used.

- Students can access the VLE via the student tab on the 'My BMS' area on the school website.

- Tutorials on using the key platforms are available.

- Students should download Microsoft Office 365 to their computer if they have not already done so.

Safety Online

We have updated our Expectations Charter to reflect our remote learning environment.

We have three key expectations:

1. Check in to the activities on offer
2. Hand in assignments on time
3. Ask if you need help

Tutors will go through this with students and we would be grateful if parents could reinforce these at home.

It is more important than ever that we all, but particularly our students, stay safe online and observe the following:

- Only communicate through approved school portals and platforms
- Stick to BMS rules and guidelines around online learning

- Don't share passwords or other sensitive information
- Don't discuss personal matters or opinions on school platforms
- Ensure your antivirus software is up to date
- Don't allow microphone and camera access to unapproved platforms
- Have you microphone muted and camera disabled by default
- Always be aware of your digital footprint
- Keep all software and apps up to date with the latest security patches
- Always sign out after use to prevent anyone else accessing your accounts.

Please find additional information on online safety in the Safeguarding Policy and the FAQs in the *Guidance on Remote Learning* section of the BMS website. Click on 'My BMS' and select 'Parents'.

Attendance

In line with Government guidelines, we will not be using our normal attendance register. We will expect students to check in regularly with their tutor, their subject teachers and complete work set. Tutors will monitor this and contact Senior Tutors and parents if there are concerns.

Please use the 'Report an Absence' button in My School Portal in the usual way if your child is unwell and therefore not accessing lessons for a period of time.

Tutor Time

All students in Year 12 are required to check in with their tutor once per day via their tutor group team on Microsoft Teams.

Mental Health

We have added a separate section on the VLE for Wellbeing and we will continue to signpost all students, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. Students who are vulnerable (ie work with external agencies such as Children's Social Care) or who are already experiencing mental health or pastoral concerns have been identified and will continue to receive support from a key member of staff. Subject teachers and tutors will be especially alert to any potential problems and will contact the student's tutor in the first instance or Mr Bailey, Pastoral Care Lead. Parents should raise any concerns about their child's mental health or wellbeing with their child's tutor in the first instance unless they already have a key worker in school.

Academic Support

Academic Support lessons will continue during this period. Teachers will make contact with their students once a week, and a regular time slot can be agreed. A record of these virtual lessons will be kept in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. We will work as normal as far as is possible, although by nature lessons may be shorter. Students and parents may contact Academic Support teachers or Miss Hendry via email at other times with questions. Students not currently receiving support may also find they need some, so please contact tutors about this in the first instance.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and Child Protection remain a priority. We have added an addendum to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which can be found in the *Guidance on Remote Learning* section of the BMS website. Click on 'My BMS' and select 'Parents'. Please do read this. You should raise minor online concerns with your child's Tutor or Senior Tutor and pass any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mrs J Goodacre.

Students should raise any minor online concerns with their Tutor and Senior Tutor via email. Should there be a heightened concern, they should inform their parents and contact Childline, UKSIC, CEOP and/or the Police.

Co-curricular and Sport

This is a fundamental part of life at BMS and we are keen that the students are still able to participate and enjoy sport and co-curricular activities even while they are learning remotely.

Sport

We aim to offer a variety of different opportunities for students of all abilities and Year Groups. Activities will include, for example, yoga, HIIT and 'Stay Active' challenges.

The first session for each year group will introduce the programme and give the students more detail on what is expected of them.
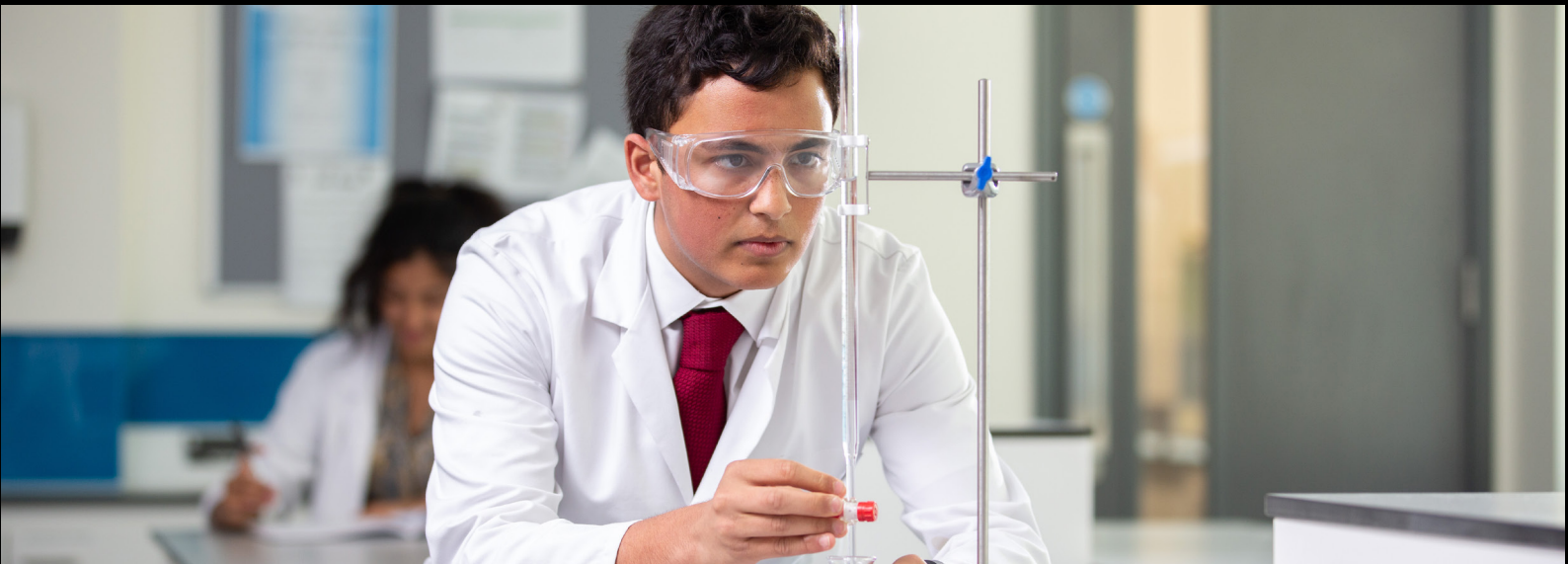
Co-curricular Provision

There will be more than 20 activities in which students can participate and which they can undertake at home. Some of these will reflect our usual BMS programme, whilst others will be more bespoke. Although there may be dedicated co-curricular slots for some year groups in the timetable, it is not expected that a whole tutor group will be undertaking the same activity at the same time. Further details on this will follow.

Communication and Feedback

It is important that we all keep communicating during this period of school closure. We welcome your feedback on how we can improve our remote learning programme but please be aware that we are operating within certain constraints.

Tutors will be closely monitoring how the students are managing their online learning and therefore we would request that you contact your child's tutor and Senior Tutor in the first instance if you have any concerns and they will pass this on to the most appropriate person for support.

Don't forget that there are a number useful documents and guides in the *Guidance on Remote Learning* section on the school website. Click on 'My BMS' and select 'Parents'.