

Maiden Beech Academy

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Tuesday 5th May 2020

Dear Parents,

UPDATE: Maiden Beech Academy Contingency Plan

I hope you and your families are well and that you are all still keeping safe.

It has been awhile since I last wrote to you all, and I thought an update with some key information and reminders would be useful in these uncertain times.

We are all missing the children very much and are looking forward to getting back to normal whenever that may be – please see info below re: school reopening, which explains we know at the moment ahead of Sunday's briefing by the Prime Minister.

Hopefully, any questions you might have are addressed in the information below; however, **if you have a query then simply phone the school on 01460 72677 or contact us via the Parent Portal messaging system**, and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Our reception is open from **7:30 am until 4:30 pm Monday to Friday**, and **Parent Portal messages are being checked throughout the day; we are responding quickly to any messages received and aim to respond within 24 hours.**

HOME LEARNING: MICROSOFT TEAMS PROJECT

Exciting news! We are hoping to go 'live' with Microsoft Teams next week. You will receive a detailed letter, including log on information for your son or daughter, from Claire Petts, Assistant Head, later this week, which will give clear instructions on what you need to do in order to access Microsoft Office 365 and the Teams App. Every child will be issued with a school email account (NAME@myMBA.school) to enable them to log into Office 365. We will also send parents an acceptable user agreement and a copy of our Remote Teaching and Learning Policy for reference.

Please rest assured that Teams will be used alongside our Pupil Portal for the foreseeable future. It is our hope that Microsoft Teams will enhance the online learning experience by allowing communication between the children and their teachers. It should also make it easier for certain tasks to be set and completed online. We are very conscious that at this difficult time, we don't want to 'throw the baby out with the bath water', so you have my assurance that this will be carefully managed to avoid any confusion.

Staff will receive online training to allow them to fully understand Teams and the other Microsoft Apps, which can be used to improve remote teaching and learning.

In terms of home learning, the work set is to support you as parents and to provide the children with some meaningful activities to occupy their time.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Please remember that most of the work set will reinforce learning already covered in class this year rather than introducing new concepts and ideas. **Whilst it is our general expectation that your son or daughter completes the work set, how much is completed on a daily basis is at your discretion.** We are keen that whilst children engage with the tasks provided, school work does not become a cause of further stress and worry at these unsettling times.

In order to ensure that you and the children are not overwhelmed by the amount of work that is being set, **we recommend spending no more than three or four hours a day on these activities:**

Daily Work	Weekly Work
30 minutes reading Practise spellings that have been set Practise times tables English OR Maths task 30 minutes physical activity – Joe Wicks’ video at 9:00 am or daily exercise allowance	Science History (Y7 & Y8) Geography (Y7 & Y8) Humanities (Y5 & Y6) French Computing Music Art BEP

Please note that these are suggested activities – do what you can. We are also very happy for your son or daughter to engage with the plethora of other online resources that are now available. Any learning is beneficial, and we really don’t want to be overly prescriptive.

I know that staff are really enjoying receiving and giving feedback on set tasks, and I would actively encourage you and your children to share pictures of their work – we would really love to see the fruits of their labour and for them to share what they have been doing.

Children unable to access the Pupil Portal – hard copies of work

We will continue to provide work packs for children that are unable to access work online. These packs are in addressed envelopes and can be collected from the front of the main entrance on a **Friday afternoon from 12:30 – 4:30 pm**. We will endeavour to deliver any work not collected by 4:30 pm on Monday or Tuesday of the following week.

SCHOOL REOPENING

There has been lots of speculation in the press and media recently about how and when schools will reopen to children; however, much of this has been contradictory and unhelpful. The truth is that there is no definitive answer yet.

Whilst I have attended numerous virtual meetings about this issue, school leaders are still waiting for a definitive answer from the Department of Education on how to proceed; hopefully, we will have more idea following the briefing later this week.

If schools reopen/partially reopen in the coming weeks, it is going to be very different to the provision that was in place before the lockdown and is likely to remain so over the next few months. There will be a new ‘normal.’

We are carefully planning how we might open Maiden Beech more widely. Our main concern when we do open the school to more staff and children will be the safety and well-being of all who attend. There are many questions to consider, and we will be able to plan in more detail once we have heard what is announced at the weekend. I will write to you again next week with a further update once we know

more.

PHONE CALLS HOME

Tutors will continue to phone home at least once a week. I have been contacted by a number of parents who are grateful for the contact and continual link with school. Because many of these calls are being made from members of staff's private numbers, they have been advised to withhold their number before calling; therefore, if you have an incoming call where the number is withheld, the chances are it is from school, so please take the call.

CHILDCARE FOR CRITICAL WORKERS

We will continue to provide essential childcare for the children of critical workers where there is no other option for the children to remain safely at home. **If you require this service, please let us know each week by Friday 4:30 pm, at the very latest, your specific requirements for the following week if known, so we can update our attendance registers and plan ahead.** However, as working requirements are likely to change on a daily basis, we do understand that this is not always possible, so we will adopt a flexible and bespoke approach when necessary to support you. We have plans in place to provide childcare from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm should it be required.

Finally, in these difficult times, I would like to wish you all well; please stay safe.

Best wishes



Carl Winch
Headteacher