



The TRUE Learning Partnership



Poynton High School and Performing Arts College

Head Teacher: Mr M Dean

Monday, 18 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to again congratulate our students on how well they are engaging with their remote learning. They have certainly met my challenge to 'Be Your Best'. Our teachers have said how impressed they are with the levels of attendance and involvement in lessons and with the work that is being completed. Thank you for your support with this. I know it is not easy managing young people's learning at home and your role is appreciated by all of us.

I also want to update you on a number of other matters.

Remote Learning

Thank you for the feedback that we have received in the first two weeks of term. It is heartening to receive some really positive responses from parents and students. We continue to develop our online teaching and learning and our staff are regularly sharing good practice in order to further improve our students' experience. In response to a number of questions I want to clarify the points below.

- **Joining live lessons** – there are a number of ways that students can join live lessons. As the norm now is that students have a live lesson for each of their lessons they will not always have a lesson set as an assignment as was the practice in the past. They should follow their normal timetable and join the lesson by clicking on the meet link in the class banner. There will be some occasions when there is not a live lesson, for example if a teacher is ill, and in that instance, they will set an assignment with the work students should complete in that hour.
- **Parents Evenings** – we have online Year 9 parents evening on 21 January and Year 10 Parents Evening on 11 February. On those days there may be an increase in independent work set for students by teachers attending those parents evenings, particularly in periods 4 and 5. This is to ensure that staff with a full teaching day are able to prepare for parents evening at the end of the day.
- **Avoiding the use of 'private messages' on Google Classroom** – we would ask that students avoid the use of 'private messages'. This is because these messages end up attached to work and are slightly hidden away, increasing the risk that they are missed. Instead students should use lesson time to ask their teachers questions,

Yew Tree Lane, Poynton,
Stockport, Cheshire SK12 1PU

Tel: 01625 871811 Fax: 01625 874541
Email: info@pchs.cheshire.sch.uk

post messages on the stream or email teachers using the school GMail in Google Classroom.

The awarding of grades in 2021

I have written to students in Years 11 and 13 today and published these letters on our website. On 15 January the government launched a two-week consultation into the awarding of grades this year. More information can be found on the school website at <https://www.phs.cheshire.sch.uk/exam-info>. I would encourage parents and students to respond to the consultation so that your views are heard. We expect the final plans to be finalised in mid-February and I will update parents and students then.

Our Reading Focus

Throughout the year we have placed a considerable focus on the importance of reading. We began the year with lessons that offered students insights into the reading interests of their teachers and we have established students completing independent reading as part of their daily lesson routines. We have also completed reading quizzes and challenges with form groups and, as ever, students have been encouraged to read outside of school hours.

During the Information Evenings earlier in the year, Mr Hoyle challenged you to model reading to your child and highlighted some of the benefits of reading which include, but are not limited to:

- **Reading is good for the brain** - it increases the blood flow and improves connectivity in the brain
- **Reading introduces new ideas** - it helps you detect patterns, solve problems and assimilate new information
- **Reading improves your self-discipline and consistency** - it forces you to form deep connections/concentration
- **Reading reduces stress** - reading can ease tensions in your muscles and heart

It is the final point that we feel needs the most emphasis at this time. In the current circumstances students could easily feel stressed and they are spending more time in front of a computer screen – factors that could have an impact on their mental health. Therefore, our aim is for students to continue to engage with their reading whilst they are learning at home in order to support their mental health. Reading that students complete at home may also include listening to audiobooks (apps such as Audible or even asking an Amazon Smart device to “tell you a story”!).

Across the next few weeks we will be encouraging students to read through a variety of strategies, including:

- Form Time Reading
- The “New Year, New Read” Challenge
- A mixture of Reading and Writing competitions

We have set-up a new @PHS_GetReading profile on Twitter to allow us to share more information and celebrate the reading achievements of our students, staff and parents.



Your support of this reading initiative is invaluable so, again, we encourage you to talk to your child about their reading, encourage them to get involved with the opportunities made available as part of their online learning, and perhaps model your own reading in the home if you can.

Investment in new windows

We are really pleased that work starts today on the replacement of windows in lower school. This represents around £730,000 worth of investment in our school and will make a real difference to the learning environment for students. We will update you on the progress of this project through our newsletter.

Lateral Flow Testing

We launched our testing programme in school last week. These tests are another tool in the fight against COVID-19. The idea is that they will help us to identify any member of staff or student who is positive but asymptomatic, enabling them to self-isolate and protect others. By the end of last-week we had tested 80 members of staff and 45 students who are in the key worker school. Although these tests are entirely voluntary we would encourage participation in order to protect others. We were also pleased to be one of the first schools to be visited by Cheshire East Council’s ‘Swab Squad’ who reviewed our procedures and gave us positive feedback.

I look forward to updating you further as the term progresses. Thank you again for all the support you are providing to our students.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Dean

Matthew Dean
Headteacher

Yew Tree Lane, Poynton,
Stockport, Cheshire SK12 1PU

Tel: 01625 871811 Fax: 01625 874541
Email: info@pchs.cheshire.sch.uk