

**Email from Matthew Bartlett (Head Master), Isabelle Erskine (Senior Depute), and James Cluckie (Academic Depute).**

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As promised previously, please find enclosed detailed information on our provision for online learning during the current restrictions. We sincerely hope that this will not be required any later than 1<sup>st</sup> February, but this will be reviewed regularly, with the reopening of schools a priority for the authorities. As a College we are very aware of the challenges that lockdown poses for pupils, parents and staff and we are as committed as ever to supporting our community in these challenging times.

From **Monday January 11<sup>th</sup>**, **S1 to S3** pupils will continue with their courses as close to normal as is possible via online learning. We have listened to the feedback from the lockdown last March and are keeping many of the normal school structures in place to support both students and parents.

We are very aware that pupils following certificate courses this year may be more anxious than others are about these changes and want to reassure them that we are continuing to do our utmost to ensure they are not disadvantaged. To avoid any uncertainty over prelim dates, **S4 to S6** pupils will return to 'normal' classwork from **Monday January 11<sup>th</sup>** focusing on completing their courses via online learning, following a similar outline to S1 to 3.

We now plan to run the prelim diet for three weeks beginning **Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup>**. This gives the mid-term break as a lead in and also leaves two weeks clear contingency beyond the currently planned return to physical schooling. An updated timetable for this will be issued, but will follow the same scheduling as the current timetable (i.e. exams originally timetabled for Monday January 11<sup>th</sup> will be on Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup>).

We appreciate that some students may feel that their recent hard work preparing for the prelims will be wasted in some way, but we would like to reassure them that cognitive science is quite clear that regular refreshing of what they have already learned will help ensure firm recall.

Our students will complete their courses over two four week blocks (see below). After the Easter break we are also planning an additional diet of exams in each subject and level. This will allow pupils an opportunity to generate their strongest evidence once they have completed all their courses.

#### **Outline Plan for S4 to 6**

Jan 11 to Feb 5 (4 weeks)	Continuing with normal classwork
Feb 8 to Feb 15	Mid-term break
Feb 16 to Mar 5 (3 weeks)	Prelim Exams
Mar 8 to Apr 1 (4 weeks)	Completion of courses
Apr 5 to Apr 16	Easter break
Apr 19 – Apr 23	Exam Preparation
Apr 26 – May 14 (3 weeks)	Exams

I hope that you find this reassuring. Any specific questions or concerns should be addressed as normal to your son/daughter's Head of Year.

Members of the leadership team are based in school every day and phones are manned from 8.30am-4pm and you will of course receive a prompt response to any questions or matters



arising. It is absolutely crucial that we continue to operate as our special community and as ever we value communication. You will of course be updated should anything change or develop over this period.

We realise that everyone's experience of lockdown and the impacts it can have will be different and that these can be quite significant. All the Pastoral and Leadership team want to support you and offer every support possible.

Kindest regards,

**Matthew Bartlett**

**Head Master**

**Isabelle Erskine**

**Senior Depute**

**James Cluckie**

**Academic Depute**

**Plans for Teaching and Learning – Senior School - January 2021**

**Guidance for parents/carers and pupils**

This document details our plans for learning from January 2021 onwards.

We recognise that digital approaches can never replace the depth of experience offered by a live classroom interaction. We also recognise that there is a need to be flexible and mindful of the home experiences of both our staff and pupils. We have taken these factors into consideration and designed plans that we believe will help pupils continue with their learning regardless of the disruption imposed.

**Online learning**



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Pupils will follow their normal school timetable with lessons posted on Schoolology. Our experience from lockdown taught us that flexibility is important for both pupils and teachers, but that live interactions through MS Teams is essential for bringing learning to life.

We will follow the plan outlined below:

- Pupils will sign-in to an allocated form teacher at 8:55am using MS Teams.
- The form teacher will take the register and deal with any pupil queries. Our chaplaincy team will provide prayer materials.
- Pastoral secretaries will follow-up on pupils not attending and will contact home.
- Pupils will then follow their 'normal' timetable for the day:

8:55-9:10	Registration
9:15-10:05	Period 1
10:10-11:00	Period 2
11:00-11:20	Break
11:20-12:10	Period 3
12:15-13:05	Period 4
13:05-13:40	Lunch
13:40-13:50	PM Registration
13:50-14:40	Period 5
14:45-15:35	Period 6

- Pupils will be registered for the afternoon by a senior leader.
- Teachers will deliver lessons using both synchronous and asynchronous\* models. If a pupil misses a live lesson, there should be a recording available to catch up.
- Pupils studying National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher subjects can expect *at least* 2 live lessons per week per subject.
- For S1-S3, pupils can expect *at least* 1 live lesson per subject per week.
- Other lessons may be delivered live.

- For the remaining periods, pupils will have access to pre-recorded lessons and activities. Our new head of digital learning, Graeme Smith, will be in touch over the next few days with examples of what this could look like.
- PSHE periods in S3&4 should be used for revision and/or homework.

### Pastoral support for pupils



We understand that pupils and parents/carers might be anxious about lockdown. Pupils might be worried about their lessons and being isolated from their friends and school community. We are eager to support pupils and we continue to prioritise their wellbeing and safety.

The following steps are in place to ensure pupils feel supported and remain connected with school:

- The Pastoral Team will provide a weekly MS Teams 'Drop-in' meeting. This will be an optional meeting for pupils to check in with their Head of Year and ask any questions they might have
- Heads of Year will continue to post regular updates on Schoology
- Pupils and parents/carers are encouraged to contact HOYs with any concerns/questions at the following email addresses:

S1: [ghartshorne@stalloysius.org](mailto:ghartshorne@stalloysius.org)

S2: [dmeechan@stalloysius.org](mailto:dmeechan@stalloysius.org)

S3: [lsturrock@stalloysius.org](mailto:lsturrock@stalloysius.org)

S4: [jconroy@stalloysius.org](mailto:jconroy@stalloysius.org)

S5: [rpiggot@stalloysius.org](mailto:rpiggot@stalloysius.org)

S6: [elawrie@stalloysius.org](mailto:elawrie@stalloysius.org)

- The Head of Additional Support works closely with the pastoral team. If you have any questions or concerns please contact [lbastekin@stalloysius.org](mailto:lbastekin@stalloysius.org)

Any safeguarding concerns should be brought to the attention of Ryan Ferrie ([rferrie@stalloysius.org](mailto:rferrie@stalloysius.org)) or Isabelle Erskine ([lberskine@stalloysius.org](mailto:lberskine@stalloysius.org))

\*In designing our approach to learning, we are utilising both Synchronous and Asynchronous learning. Both have significant advantages and disadvantages, hence our proposal to include both types in our plan.

**Synchronous learning** is close to live teaching and allows us to have human contact with pupils. We used this during lockdown to deliver our MS Team clinics. This form of delivery is important for maintaining learning and helping pupils feel part of a school. The disadvantage of live learning is that it can be difficult to deliver, especially if have caring responsibilities at home e.g. looking after young children due to closure of nurseries and/or illness. Similarly the home circumstances of some pupils may make attending all lessons at specific times difficult.

**Asynchronous learning** involves teachers pre-recording lessons. This could be a narrated PowerPoint or series of activities that pupils have to work through, carefully sequenced to achieve the learning outcomes. The main advantage is the flexibility. Pupils can access the



resources at a time of their choosing and teachers can work around commitments in school and/or at home.

Regardless of our model, we can never replicate the experience of a classroom. This is especially true for practical subjects where the practical elements do not translate well to online platforms.