

20th March 2020

Dear Parent,

As promised, I am pleased to write to you with an update which specifically relates to the work we have been doing in school to support your child with their education at home. Whilst we are unsure about the length of time that schools will be closed, I hope that the information in this letter provides you with reassurance that the school has put in place an extensive set of resources and ideas so that you can support your child at home during the coming weeks. At the end of this letter, I have also added some information about how you can keep yourself up to date with specific developments in Cumbria.

Self-Study Guide

We have published a handy self-study guide for students and parents which you can access on our website [here](#) or via our Facebook page. Whilst the self-study guide does not relate to specific subjects, it will provide a useful reminder to children and parents about the steps you can take to manage your own learning at a time when school is closed and teachers and support staff will not be as easy to contact.

Website Subject Pages

We recommend that the subject pages on our website are the first place to visit if your child is unsure about what to study. Each subject area has their own page which contains year group specific information about the topics your child will cover. Please take some time to familiarise yourself with our entire website as this will provide the backbone for helping to focus your child on their year group specific content during this period of school closure. As mentioned in a previous letter, your child may also enjoy looking at the content of other year groups.

Microsoft SharePoint

Your child's teachers have been developing subject specific materials which will be available to your child through their Office 365 SharePoint access. Through SharePoint, teachers can create secure class groups and also provide general information for specific year groups. Please take some time with your child to familiarise yourself with the SharePoint. Whilst we have spent some time prioritising the content for our older students, there is also a wealth of information available to Key Stage 3 students which you will find helpful.

Expectations of students

Even though The Lakes School is closed until further notice, we expect all of our students to uphold the expectations we have about their behaviour and conduct. We are an inclusive school and value our caring, learning environment and this has not changed. We still expect all students to communicate with each other in a respectful manner and to demonstrate kindness, consideration and thoughtfulness when communicating with staff and students.

Using Microsoft teams is new territory for the vast majority of students and we appreciate that teachers and students will be getting used to this software in the coming weeks as we all work through this period of adjustment. Any student who fails to meet the schools expectations whilst using Microsoft teams or any other aspect of the school approved office 365 system will have their school account revoked until further notice. Internally, we have very advanced systems which monitor the use of the school Office 365 subscription and staff will be reporting any issues so that they can be followed up. I would like to apologise for what may seem to be a rather low key message at a time when we should be maintaining a positive approach to everything we do. However, it is important for me to reassure students and parents that the school remains intolerant of poor behaviour and bullying, even though we are closed. We will still contact parents to discuss issues should they arise. Thank you to all of our parents for supporting your child during this time, not only with their learning, but also with their responsible use of the school office 365 system.

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The importance of reading

The school has worked hard in recent times to embed a culture of reading. Reading regularly provides young people with the strongest possible foundation for the future and we would recommend that your child continues to make time to read. Our Year 7 and 8 students routinely enjoy timetabled access to the Accelerated Reader programme and we recommend that students continue their good habits regarding their reading.

Online learning websites

There are a number of online learning websites that are currently offering a free period of access to parents and this is something that you may wish to explore should you wish to access a wider range of resources and ideas than those that have been provided by the school. There are many sites available and, whilst the school would not necessarily recommend one site over another, we do make use of Twinkl to support some students.

UCAS

It is possible that our Year 13 students will be receiving various updates from universities and we recognise that they may need to speak to someone in school about their UCAS applications. We will shortly be emailing all Year 13 students to explain how they can get help from school if they encounter a problem with their application.

Communicating with the school during the closure

The school telephone will not be staffed or monitored regularly from 23rd March 2020. However, we recognise that staff and students may need to contact the school so please find some useful email addresses below. We are providing a Learning Support email address specifically to relevant parents which you should receive in the post shortly.

General Enquiries	Admin@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk
Office 365 Password Issues	Password@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk
Student worries or concerns for the attention of the pastoral team	Pastoral@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk

Situation from Monday 23rd March 2020

For clarification, The Lakes School will be closed from Monday 23rd March 2020. We do not yet know when we will be able to reopen but we will keep up to date with government advice and will keep you fully informed as things change. You can access updates from Cumbria County Council by clicking [here](#).

During this period of closure, I know that we can rely on your continued patience and understanding, particularly with regard to the ability of school staff to support your child's learning when they themselves are affected by the impact of the virus. The Lakes School is fully closed from next week due to staff availability following government guidance regarding social distancing.

In closing, the governors and staff at The Lakes School would like to warmly thank all parents and students for your heart-warming support during what has been a particularly busy time. Many of you have taken a moment to email the school with expressions of gratitude which I will be sure to share amongst our team as part of our fortnightly good news briefing. I would like to take this opportunity to express my own appreciation and thanks to the governors and staff at The Lakes School. I could not wish to work with a more dedicated and forward looking team. You have filled this challenging week with good humour and an overwhelming dedication to supporting students and their families. Thank you!

Best wishes to everyone connected to The Lakes School. Look after each other.



Andy Cunningham
Headteacher



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