



Coronavirus (COVID19) - 30 April 2020

Dear Parents

The past few weeks have seen a period of extraordinary change. Whilst we hope that the coronavirus pandemic will be a once in a lifetime event, this is uncertain. What is certain is that Covid-19 is having far-reaching consequences for us all professionally and personally. The global response to the pandemic will continue for some time, and new ways of living and working will be the norm for the foreseeable future. At Sir Thomas Rich's, our primary concern will always be the health, safety and wellbeing of our pupils, staff and other members of the school community. At the moment, we are trying to ensure that pupils can continue with their studies, albeit for most, remotely. We have had to make some difficult choices about how we can deliver these outcomes, but equity, fairness to all involved and practicality underpin the decisions made.

At some point, based on scientific and medical advice, we'll be informed that the current lockdown restrictions are being loosened. This is likely to involve the opening of schools for some pupils and some staff on a staged basis. Whilst the decision to open to larger numbers of pupils will not be ours, we are already working hard to ensure that when we are asked to extend our in-school provision we will put the safety, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff first. We will also continue to contribute to the national effort and strategy to fight the spread of Covid-19 and have measures in place to ensure we comply with social distancing rules. Nevertheless, for the time being we are planning to continue to use SMHW to help pupils to access the curriculum remotely.

Equipment

We've had a few enquiries from parents asking for advice as their child has run out of equipment, for example, what to do when they have come to the end of their exercise book. Whilst I am pleased that our pupils are working hard to complete the work set by their teachers, I'm afraid that we do not have the resources to send new supplies to each student's home and, due to the social distancing measures currently in place, it would not be safe to arrange pick-up from school. My advice is to use a notebook (lined or plain paper, A4 or any size that is available) to complete any notes or written work. As far as possible, teachers are setting work that can be word-processed and saved without the need to write anything down on paper. However, if your child is in receipt of the Pupil Premium and you require equipment, please contact Rhys Davies: rmd@strs.org.uk

Virtual Lessons

If you are a parent of a Year 12 student, you might have noticed that in the last week that your son or daughter has attended a trial virtual lesson with their teacher on Microsoft Teams. We know that teachers and pupils are missing the sense of community and connectedness that school offers so we have been busy exploring the use of secure video-conferencing platforms as a means of enhancing pupils' learning by offering them some face-to-face contact with their teacher and their class. At the moment, we are very much in the experimental phase; teachers want to be sure that they can offer the best quality learning experience to our pupils. Therefore, SMHW will continue to be the primary means of teaching and learning during this period. Although it will inevitably disappoint some parents and pupils, there are no immediate plans to replace SMHW with live-streaming of lessons.

Supporting your child's learning at home

There has been plenty of coverage in the media about "home-schooling" which has presented both pupils and their parents with a unique set of challenges. As we've all been adjusting to our new circumstances, it is important to remember that there is no proven method of effective remote learning; everyone is different and will encounter different obstacles at different times. This is true of all learning whether it be at school or at home. However, it might be helpful to bear a few things in mind: try to stick to a routine, your child might prefer to get on with subjects like Maths and English in the morning and move on to more creative subjects or tasks in the afternoon or vice-versa. However, following a pupil's normal school timetable is often the most straightforward approach. Praise and encouragement motivates all of us, particularly if your child has found the task to be difficult or has struggled to get started. If your son or daughter doesn't understand something, encourage them to move on and start something else. I have asked teachers to set discrete work so that your child can re-join the learning next lesson. Our school curriculum is also designed so that pupils have the opportunity to re-visit and develop their understanding of key concepts so it will be possible to return to a particular topic. If you require more support, please do get in touch with the Head of Year:

- Year 7 Mrs J Robinson: jrr@strs.org.uk
- Year 8 Mr Z Hinds: zfh@strs.org.uk
- Year 9 Mr N O'Neil: no@strs.org.uk
- Year 12 Mr B O'Neill: bon@strs.org.uk
- Year 10 Mr D Tilley: dpt@strs.org.uk
- Year 11 Mr N Stewart: njs@strs.org.uk
- Year 13 Miss E Jauncey: elj@strs.org.uk

Other resources to support your child's learning

You may also be interested in a free webinar for parents led by Elevate who run sessions on revision and exam preparation to pupils in school:

Title: How to help your child study effectively without becoming the enemy

Date: Tuesday 12th May 2020

Time: 6:00 – 7:00pm

Sign up link: <https://www.elevatecoaching.info/webinar-uk-1/>

Places are limited so booking will be on a first-come-first-served basis.

You may also want to direct your child to the [BBC](#) website which has developed its online learning platform in line with the National Curriculum specifically to support children up to and including GCSE. The [Department for Education](#) has published a list of free resources for home education in Maths, English, Science, PE, wellbeing and for pupils with SEND. The [University of Oxford](#) has also compiled a set of resources to offer general advice and guidance on learning at home to parents and children across the age-ranges. Finally, pupils should be able to access SharePoint through the School's remote server where each department has a range of resources which can support your son or daughter's learning.

Staying Connected

It may have cheered you or your son or daughter to see photos of the work pupils have completed in Art and in Food Technology on the School's social media and on our website. It's been great to hear news of how pupils are getting on at home. If you have any photos or experiences that you would like to share with parents, staff and students, please email Sara Vielvoye with brief details: svj@strs.org.uk

I know I talk a lot about our strength as a community, and certainly some of that community spirit is usually fostered by us all meeting in school, but the sense of community does extend far beyond the school site – as the coronavirus spreads anxiety, anger, sorrow and anguish across the globe, it is great to see that current and former pupils are finding ways to share information and support each other during these challenging times.

As always, thank you for your continued support,

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SirThomasRichsSchool

Twitter: [@strsglos](https://twitter.com/strsglos)



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