

Dear Parents/carers,



CV19 daily update (Issue 11 – Thursday 26th March 2020 – 12.00pm)

Dear everyone,

I keep thinking that each successive Newsletter will be shorter than the previous one, however so much material is coming in it is hard to edit down. So, feel free to skim read the items that are not directly relevant to you and apologies for the length of today's issue.

We are almost at the end of week 1 VLC and will be adjusting things slightly from next week. Your comments and feedback have been really useful in helping to shape our planning – thank you.

One thing we are considering is a slight shortening of lesson time, particularly for KS3 students. It seems as though they are logging out from one session and then almost immediately logging in to the next one. We think they need to at least stretch their legs and get a breather, so will work on this and inform students once finalised.

There are a number of sections below with useful information and links. Happy reading.

World Class Schools initiative for year 11 and 13 students

Sandringham is one of the 100 or so *World Class Schools* and this gives us access to an exciting array of different resources for students. See below for year 11 and 13.

1. **NEW.** Certificated, independent, highly impactful projects for [Year 11 and Year 13](#) to complete now. The link is public for your Year 11s and Year 13s. No computer needed for completion.
2. Year 11 and Year 13 should join our World Class alumni general and specialist Facebook groups to stay engaged with and supported by #worldclass peers. They need to get on the pages and start the conversations.

- [General](#)
- [Physics and mathematics](#)
- [Technology and engineering](#)
- [Human science](#)
- [Performing arts](#)
- [Social science](#)
- [Humanities and languages](#)

3. Our #worldclass supplier Strengthening Minds has sent out a free 'Staying at Home in Style' guide, for your students of all ages, and families, attached, @StrMinds. This would be helpful for your Year 11s and 13s who are looking after younger siblings – follow this link for the information.

https://f416d0a2-db80-48ab-8828-48a3480497ad.filesusr.com/ugd/35ee33_2d6a125a358b43df9d8eb58d0c45078c.pdf

Information about year 11 and 13 examination outcomes

We expect clarification from the Secretary of State about this year's qualification grading next week. As soon as this comes through, we will review the information and ensure Sandringham students and their families are informed of the way forward.

PowerPoint for parents on how to use Google Classroom

For some reason, the link sent yesterday did not function. The one below should now take you to this excellent presentation from Mr Allday.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1hSS8iVH9acNSpNZ3OXv0Sah1NGPoZ5Hp7_rQOen9qQk/edit?usp=sharing

Some more advice from the government and also about on-line safety

- Talk to their children about coronavirus (COVID-19), social distancing and hand washing.
- Follow [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#).
- Do not gather at entrances or in playgrounds, and model social distancing so that their children learn good practice.

The link below will take you to some useful online safety guides for teachers and parents
[:www.nationalonlinesafety.com/guides](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com/guides)

A screen shot from one of the year 12 English lessons – all reading together!



EXPERIENCING ANXIETY?

When we get anxious, we can suffer from all sorts of things from crazy thoughts to an upset stomach to a panic attack with a quickening heart beat and shortness of breath.

If you're having a wobble, you may also have noticed all sorts of weird stuff going on. Are you arguing more, talking faster, struggling to sleep, restless, desperate for information? Or are you teary and overwhelmed, perhaps feeling a bit sick? Struggling to make decisions? Just want to stay in bed? Tummy upsets? Having palpitations, butterflies, headaches? Ranting, picking fights or getting into arguments? Laughing unexpectedly or saying random, inappropriate things? Or have you just completely gone to ground?

If you are feeling any of these things: good news! You are not going mad. And you are 100% not alone. You are, in fact completely normal: a fully emotionally functional human being.

THE SCIENCE BIT. When we are exposed to threats and need to deal with them, our brain springs into action. The amygdala is the bit of the brain that is in charge when we are frightened and right now, it's in full tin-hat klaxon mode. Unfortunately, it's also very ancient bit of kit. It came into being when threats basically consisted of being eaten by large scary animals!

So, this is what the body gets you ready to do. It's called the Fight or Flight response (there's also freeze, meaning you just get paralysed). It does this by flooding your body with chemicals like cortisol, and adrenaline. Your heart rate goes up, you feel super alert, your breathing gets shallow and your muscles are ready for action. These chemicals are also largely responsible for the huge range of other cognitive/physical/emotional reactions - anxiety is even more infectious than the virus!

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: Anxiety isn't just mental – it's also physical, cognitive and behavioural. You might notice all kinds of things: stomach upsets, headaches, not sleeping, changes to eating, changes to the way you talk.

SO WHAT TO DO:

BREATHE. It's so basic, but breathing exercises are basically magic. They work in minutes and you can do them anywhere. They work because of all the physical reactions the amygdala triggers; rapid breathing is the only one over which we have conscious control. Control your breathing and you are basically telling your body: it's OK.

- In through the nose, out through the mouth. SLOWLY
- Make the outbreath longer than the inbreath – imagine there's a candle in front of you and it mustn't go out
- Breathe from the tummy not chest – really make your tummy go out when breathing in.
- Do it for two minutes - time yourself - and see how you feel

Seriously, try it – this technique is used by everyone from top athletes to the US military to help stay in control while under stress. There are all sorts of versions – from yogic breathing to box breathing to 4-7-8. Google them, mess around, figure out what works for you.

CALL A FRIEND: Don't suffer alone - someone who'll listen while you have a bit of a rant, or a cry, or a general wobble. Someone you can trust not to judge you and who'll just sympathise. And if you get one of those calls, just be nice to them. You only need to be kind. You can't fix what's going on so just give them a bit of space to rant and tell them they're normal and doing great. And if you're OK, call your friends and check in on them. Especially if they've gone silent.

LAUGH: it doesn't matter what is funny – laughter is a huge releaser of endorphins. Silly memes, silly jokes, stand-up, rolling around with YouTube. The sillier the better – it's also very good for bonding with friends, which will also help you feel less alone.

DO SOMETHING WITH YOUR HANDS. Yes, you can meditate if this is your thing, it's amazing. But if it's not, do something instead with your hands, something that needs you to focus on to get right. Cook. Tidy. Knit. Draw. Bake. Garden. Mend things. This is what therapists call Mindfulness.

TREAT YOUR BODY: We hold stress in our bodies at least as much as our minds. Take a bath or a shower. Put on things that feel good on your skin. Use nice smelling body creams.

SUNSHINE. It's SPRINGTIME! If you can't go outside, open the windows and feel it on your face and breathe it in. If it's safe for you to go outside, while of course observing social distance-Go for a walk. Being outdoors, even in your garden, connecting to nature, is hugely calming.

STEP AWAY FROM SOCIAL MEDIA/THE NEWS: All it will do will scare you!

BE KIND: to yourself and others. Think comfort books, comfort telly, comfort drawing, comfort everything! Go make yourself a nice drink, sit by a window and drink it in this lovely morning sunshine. Controlling your breathing can be magical, you can do it anytime, anywhere.

Times Educational Supplement (TES)

The TES is a major publication that schools and teachers use to share information. Their latest article is below:

Coronavirus: Praise for hero teachers on the front line

Schools have gone 'above and beyond' to help pupils during the coronavirus crisis, say parents and colleagues

By Amy Gibbons

25 March 2020 - 17:38



It's been a hugely challenging week for school staff on the front line, with many putting their own health at risk to care for children of key workers battling the coronavirus crisis.

But their hard work has not gone unnoticed, even if things have felt overwhelming.

Many parents and colleagues have got in touch with TES to say thank you to the teachers, school leaders and support staff doing their bit to fight the virus.

We have compiled some of their heart-warming stories of hope and generosity below.

The 'incredible' school with a virtual choir

The staff at Sandringham School in St Albans have been "amazing", according to parent Beccy Pile.

Headteacher Alan Gray sends out a daily update for parents, and the school has even set up a "virtual choir".

Ms Pile said: "My sons' school, Sandringham School, has been incredible. We took our two boys [in Years 10 and 12] out a few days early as I have severe asthma and we were concerned.

"Since then, my boys have followed the online timetable, getting support when they need it.

"I unfortunately now have the Covid-19 symptoms so cannot support them really, but I have not worried at all. They are happily getting on with it, they know their teachers are there to help.

"I am only discovering now that the teachers at school have probably been putting up with random bouts of singing from my Year 10 son, if the last few days are anything to go by!"



[Amy Gibbons@tweetsbyames](#)

And finally, some more feedback from you

Thank you so much for the outstanding support and communication you are offering to parents and pupils during this confinement period. My children (year 7 and year 10) have been able to work independently and are actually enjoying the structure and delivery of the classes. We are so lucky to have an amazing teaching staff and leadership.

The work provided for my sons is exemplary. They are getting such quality learning. I feel so lucky that they are at Sandringham, during these challenging times. Really, it's better than what the private sector is coming up with. Mr Neville's daily tasks are fab. Also, I did PE outside with my youngest on Monday, and he showed me Mr Bailey's challenge of kicking a football into a measured off square. So, my son was remembering and applying learning from previous lessons. Brilliant. Your staff are amazing.

We would like to thank you for your focus, support, regularity of communication and response time. Your team was clearly preparing for a scenario something like this although presumably not as extensive as the situation we find ourselves in. The online activities are very important for keeping our son learning and occupied. We were particularly delighted to see a strong PE programme which he is really enjoying!

I just wanted to pass on my heartfelt thanks for the amazing way the whole staff team have managed the ever evolving changes of the past week. The virtual learning has been a huge success. The plans for yr 11 transition to 6th form are reassuring. I have appreciated the support you have provided for the children. I am a frontline NHS worker so not having to worry about my children's education at this highly stressful time has been more than appreciated. All the Sandringham team should be immensely proud of themselves at this time when no one had any idea of how to manage this situation.

Just wanted to say what an awesome job the year 7 team are doing to keep a steady flow of lessons and work. Our daughter is really enjoying the independent working, communicating with her peers etc. She has been saying there's not enough work and not sure what to do! We are encouraging her to do art and be more creative. Again, well done to all the team.

Just to say a huge thank you to all the Sandringham staff. The school seems to have been extremely well prepared even when things were vague and difficult. I can't believe how quickly you have managed to get lessons online and think creatively about motivating everyone. It's incredibly impressive. All us parents owe you so, so much.

I certainly would like to add my voice to those praising the school. From the start of this outbreak the school has performed way above my expectations with exceptional professionalism and care. The regular communications and quickly implemented strategies for our children was exemplary. My year 9 Son is well set up and has moved into the routine with ease of the schedule that has been put in place for their learning. I would like to convey my thanks to all your staff and hope that you all stay well and safe through these times.

Thank you and well done for implementing the online lesson programme so quickly and effectively. Our son (yr12) said today he is finding it very good and is working more efficiently at home than at school. He explained

that it's easier so long as you can find a way of learning that works for you. Well done to all of you for helping our children keep to a routine and getting on during this crazy time. Thank you so much

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to all of your staff, I am so impressed with the creative way that my son is currently being educated. He is motivated and happy at a time where his anxiety levels could be so high. You all must be working so hard to maintain this and I just wanted to say how grateful we are. Thank you.

Please pass on my thanks to all the staff who will have been working tirelessly to keep everyone safe and cared for during these difficult times: office staff, site staff, cleaners, caterers and teaching staff. The regular communications from school have been so helpful in terms of allaying fears and helping to keep worries in perspective. They have struck the right tone between giving strong public health guidance whilst emphasising the important aspects of learning. The focus on education being about the learning process and a body of knowledge that sustains rather than end assessments has been particularly good, especially if one has students in both Year 11 and Year 13. Overall, what helps most is the feeling that the school cares deeply and this has been exemplified many times over the past few weeks. E.g. Teachers helping pupils to complete coursework in time (thank you Ms. Meeking), teachers responding immediately to concerns about home learning (thank you Ms. Fox), teachers writing to offer support for the next pathway (thank you Mr. Miller and Ms. Mouncey).

*Thank you very much for all your hard work at this present time ...and in the past .
Your ceaseless endeavours are a fine example to all other schools in Herts. and beyond, in provision of education for secondary pupils , during this time of unprecedented health pandemic.(WHO) Please be ENCOURAGED. I'm sure that all parents are as grateful as I am .*

I just wanted to say how impressed we have been with the home schooling this week . My son in year 10 and daughter in year 7 have really enjoyed the lessons so far and have adapted well to this new way of learning. For the teachers to pull this programme together in such a short timescale is nothing short of miraculous. Working for the NHS during this crisis is exhausting, but knowing our children are being both occupied and educated has been a great relief and allowed me to focus on keeping our patients and staff as safe as possible from this virus. Thanks to all your teachers and support staff.

I wanted to drop a brief note to thank Sandringham staff for their dedication, hard work and commitment throughout this unsettling period. The daily updates you have been providing are relevant, factual and have certainly clarified things for our household in the last week which hasn't been easy as we had an incredibly anxious Year 13 student to deal with!

I also wanted to highlight your hard work in mobilising the virtual learning curriculum so quickly and efficiently- wow! Hats off to all the staff and please pass on our thanks. Our son in Year 9 certainly seems to have embraced "working from home" with a routine that is working for us and is so important during this difficult period. Many thanks to all involved it really is appreciated.

Thank you! We just wanted to say to you all a huge thank you for all your efforts and time in keeping the timetable as seamless as possible. Our daughter, in year 7, isn't just having to contend with a new school, new year but also learning via the VLC. You have educated them well in the term they have been with you and it is a relief, as a parent, to know she is able to log in and take ownership of her learning. I also feel it is important to keep continuity for the children in these uncertainties. Amazing work! Keep safe and well and we hope to return to normal, sooner rather than later!

Hope the above is helpful.

With best wishes

Alan Gray