

20 April 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Firstly, thank you so much for all your support during the first two weeks of distance learning that happened before the Easter break. As I am sure you can appreciate, things happened very quickly and whilst we had anticipated a school closure, some of the details of the announcement came as a shock to us too.

It is important for us all to remember that whilst the buildings are closed, Downham Market Academy remains open through our [Schooling from Home portal](#) and it is expected that all of our students will engage in lessons every day.

Our aim is that *no child* at Downham Market Academy is disadvantaged due to coronavirus pandemic and current school closures and that *every child* is able to continue to learn. We appreciate that adjusting to this new way of working is challenging and we want to support you and your children to make the most of the resources available. We also understand that some of our students may be directly affected by the coronavirus and become ill themselves or have family members or friends who become ill. This is a time for families to grow closer but we are here to support our students and their families if needed.

We have listened to your feedback and evaluated our process for ensuring a continued education for our students during the enforced closure period. We have produced two guides for parents on how to access the work set (both show the same thing, one is a [written guide](#) and second is a [video](#)) – these can also be found in the [Schooling from Home portal](#) under the “Browse Subject Resources” link. We continue to welcome any thoughts you have on how we can improve things.

We understand that communication between school and home is so important at any time, but particularly during these unprecedented times. To that end, we will:

- Use Parent Mail to provide key information and updates
- Share information, interesting links and successes on the DMA [Facebook](#) page (please like/follow this to receive updates directly to your timeline)
- Communicate directly with students via their Academy “ooblemail” address
- Share news and non-academic activities including wellbeing and competitions for students in the “DMA Dispatch”

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We appreciate your support

You are not expected to become teachers and your children aren't expected to learn in the same way as they do in school. Simply providing your children with some structure at home will help them to adapt and continue to learn whilst we all support this national effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19.

This will look different for every family and we would encourage you to reflect on what does or does not work for you. Involve your children in these discussions and aim to balance the needs of each family member – we appreciate that adults may well be trying to work from home or care for younger siblings for example.

It is important that you take care of your own health and wellbeing. This will be new for your entire household, so give it time to settle. Why not try some of the wellbeing activities that Mrs Gunns sends through each day that can be enjoyed as a family or on your own.

Keep to a timetable wherever possible

- Create and stick to a routine if you can as this is what children are used to. For example, eat breakfast at the same time and make sure they're dressed before starting the 'school' day – avoid letting them lay in until lunchtime or staying in pyjamas!
- Stick the timetable up on the wall so everyone knows what they should be doing when, and tick activities off throughout the day
- Designate a working space if possible, and at the end of the day have a clear cut-off to signal home learning time is over
- As a starting point, try to use your child's school timetable to plan lessons for the day – aim to complete three subjects each day according to what they would have been doing in a normal day
- Be flexible!
 - If a task/activity is going well or your children want more time, let it extend where possible
 - If they are finding a task challenging or frustrating you can email any questions to the addresses on the [Schooling from Home portal](#), leave the task and come back to it later. You are not alone!
 - If you have more than 1 child at home, consider combining their timetables. For example, they might exercise and do maths together so they can support each other – see what works for your household. If they both/all need to use a device, stagger activities over the day so everyone can access it at different times
 - For lessons that require access to an online platform, consider completing these activities at "unpopular" times such as earlier in the morning, late afternoons or on the weekend. If the site crashes, it may be that many thousands of students are trying to access it at once, all over the country!

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- Distinguish between weekdays and weekends and holidays, to separate home learning life and home life. At weekends and in the holidays make time for other family activities as well as giving children their own time and space

Accessing schoolwork for your child

- You and your children will receive a single email reminding you that new work has been set for the week, first thing on a Monday morning. You can then access all the work from the [Schooling from Home portal](#) and this will be updated with work for the week by 9am each Monday morning
- For each subject, there will be an overview page of the work to be completed, with expectations of what resources should be used, an expectation of the time needed, work to be completed, and any submissions with a clear deadline and how the work is to be submitted – almost like a lesson plan!
- The work **does not** have to be completed in one sitting and can be spread out over the course of the week
- Lessons will have audio and video clips embedded in the resource to explain tasks and provide support. These will likely ask the audio/video to be paused while your child then completes the task/activity before restarting the audio/video
- Email addresses found on the [Schooling from Home portal](#) can be used to contact each of the departments for specific support with a task or lesson
- Each week there will be LIVE Skype lessons – in these sessions students will receive a more directed learning experience with the support of one of their teachers. Guidance for these sessions was sent before the Easter break. Where possible these will be recorded and uploaded to the [Schooling from Home portal](#). A timetable for these sessions is included at the end of this letter.
- Staff at DMA will phone and email parents and carers to support learning and to ensure that children and their families are all coping. We are not permitted to phone students on their own personal mobile numbers but we are happy to speak to children on the home phone or parents/carers mobile numbers
- If you are struggling with any logins or passwords, please email lostpassword@downhammarketacademy.co.uk (please check junk folders for replies)

We are aware that the BBC is set to launch some resources today and the Government have commissioned a team of teachers to produce work under the “Oak National Academy” banner. We have not had a preview of these resources but will be interested to see what they have to offer.

Support for parents and carers

Please do not feel alone – all DMA staff are working from home and are here to support you and your children. If you do need to get advice or support with a learning activity or if you would like to talk to a member of staff about another concern, please do get in touch with us

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- Phone (**01366 389136**) – please leave a message as this is the only line that will be regularly checked
- Email using staff email addresses
- Email to worried@downhammarketacademy.co.uk if you have concerns regarding the safety or welfare of yourself or another student
- Email to senteam@downmarketacademy.co.uk if you would like specific support regarding special educational needs

There are also a wealth of resources available should you prefer to read through information yourself:

- The “Safeguarding & Welfare for Students” page on the [DMA](#) website contains many guides and useful contacts for parents. Of particular interest during the national lockdown might be the dedicated page for parents and carers on how to ensure your children are [safe online](#)
- The new NHS “[Just One Norfolk](#)” website provides parents and carers with contact details for different services in Norfolk that you are now able to self-refer to
- The [MIND](#) website offers advice and guidance for parents/carers regarding their own mental health and wellbeing as well as that of their children
- The [Anna Freud](#) website provides succinct advice to support families with different sections for adults and children

Thank you for your ongoing support

Kind regards



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Timetables for live skype sessions:

Year 7	Subject	Time
Monday	Maths	10:00-11:00
Tuesday	English - Unseen Phenomenon	13:00-14:00
Wednesday	Science	10:00-11:00
Thursday	Technology - Design Work	09:00-10:00

Year 8	Subject	Time
Tuesday	English	10:00-11:00
Wednesday	Maths	10:00-11:00
Thursday	Science	10:00-11:00

Year 9	Subject	Time	Subject	Time	Subject	Time
Monday	English	11:00-12:00				
Tuesday	Maths	9:00-10:00	English - Romeo & Juliet	10:00-11:00	Science	11:00-12:00

Year 10	Subject	Time	Subject	Time	Subject	Time	Subject	Time
Monday	History (NHT/SAN)	09:00-10:00	Physics	10:00-11:00	Geography Paper 3	12:00-13:00	History (JOY)	13:00-14:00
Tuesday	French	09:00-10:00	Chemistry	10:00-11:00	English - Romeo and Juliet	12:00-13:00		
Wednesday	Engineering and Product Design	09:00-10:00	Biology	10:00-11:00	Hospitality and Catering	12:00-13:00		
Thursday			English - Romeo and Juliet	10:00-11:00			Maths	13:00-14:00
Friday			Childcare	10:00-11:00			Maths	13:00-14:00