

Our Lady's Catholic College

Learn, live, love together in a caring Catholic community



2nd February 2021

Dear Parents,

Thank you to all of who completed our survey about the provision of remote learning. We are so pleased that the system seems to be working well and are delighted that the learning provision was judged as 4 stars. We were also heartened by your acknowledgement of how difficult it is for teachers to adapt to a new way of teaching and learn how to use a new learning platform. However, that shows there is still room for improvement and we really appreciate your suggestions which will help us make things better for pupils and their families. A few of the issues that were raised by several parents are explained below:

Lessons are cancelled

Unfortunately, teachers sometimes are unable to deliver a live lesson due to illness, appointments, or technical issues. They will endeavour to set alternative work and resume live lessons when possible. I have also asked teachers to post invites to lessons by 5pm the day before the lesson. Most lessons should now have been set as recurring invites so the pupils will see the lesson in their calendar but will not keep getting invite notifications so it is important they check each morning.

Late invites for lessons

We would love to think that all work of the teachers could finish at the end of the school day but of course after teaching all day they then plan future lessons. This does mean that there will be notifications for pupils later in the evening. Whilst I am sure you are impressed with teachers' commitment it may be a concern to you and your children, but please reassure them they do not need to check any notifications after 3pm.

How can I see their lessons and assignments?

If you have a Microsoft email you can download the Teams app. You can then add other accounts to it. This means that you can log in and see your children's calendar and assignments.

My child cannot ask the teachers questions

I have asked staff to make sure they have the chat option open so that pupils can ask questions

Concern that there is too much work

Following the government guidelines, we are setting 5 hours of work for pupils with more work for Sixth Formers who are expected to do more independent study. Your responses suggest that we have overestimated how much can be done in a one-hour live lesson. Staff have been told to instruct pupils to submit what they have completed by the end of the lesson rather than working on this after 3pm. It is important pupils have time to relax and get away from the screen. If your child is in Year 7-11 and is doing more than 5 hours regularly please stop them from completing the work and inform their Progress Leader.

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We have made a slight alteration to live lessons to give more time for task completion. Teachers will always start the live lesson but on alternate lessons may just explain the task and set them off to work on it. We hope this will give a better balance of teacher explanation and pupils practising and applying what they have learned.

Uploading work

This was raised as a frequent concern. The school system should allow work to be submitted. We have uploaded a help sheet, kindly prepared by a parent. You can find it on our website <https://www.olcc.lancs.sch.uk/page/?title=TEAMS+%2D+how+to+use+teams+%2D+Video+guides+and+booklet&pid=134>

We have been informed that network connection, bandwidth and charge on the device may affect the ability to upload work. If your child has tried but failed to upload work, please contact the teacher to explain in order that they are not asked to repeat the work.

Wellbeing

The results of the survey made it clear that many of you have concerns about the wellbeing of children whilst understanding that it is important that we only open schools to more pupils when it is safe to do so. We will continue with form times and assemblies where this is best addressed but we are also marking Children's Mental Health week. We understand that the last 12 months has been particularly difficult for pupils due to the various lockdown restrictions. We also know that many of them miss being in school and find working online every day challenging. To give them time to focus on their wellbeing we are cancelling live lessons for period 4 and 5 this Thursday. We will send a presentation about mental health that we would like them to look at and we encourage them to use the afternoon to relax and do something they enjoy. Maybe take a walk, bake a cake, read a book, or phone a friend they have not had the chance to speak to for a while. Please encourage your child to contact their form tutor or PSO if they need to talk to someone about how they are feeling.

Working on phones

Some parents mentioned that their child was trying to work on a mobile phone. This is not ideal and if this is the case and they have no alternative at home please contact school. We have given out 150 laptops since September and will try to help anyone who is struggling to provide a device to complete school work on.

Year 11 and Year 13 Qualifications

The consultation into how best give grades to pupils in Year 11 and the sixth form has now closed. We await the findings and will update you when we know more.

February Half Term

School will be closed to all pupils currently in school during half term. There will be no work set or live lessons. I hope you and your families are able to enjoy time together without home schooling and that the weather allows you to enjoy the approaching spring without getting cold and wet.

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I hope that this information helps in some way and that the experience gets even better. We do appreciate your patience whilst we smooth out technical issues. The government has announced that schools will not begin to open to more pupils until, at the earliest, 8th March. This means that we still have a number of weeks of remote learning. Thank you so much for your support in enabling your children to continue learning. We know that it is your encouragement that keeps them motivated at home.

Your sincerely

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