

27 March 2020

Good morning everyone

I've realised that Pinehurst's 'Day 3' is the country's 'Day 2', but I've always had a taste for the slightly absurd, and these are certainly surreal days.

Many thanks again to all those who have written to me with thanks, positive comments, and ideas for improvement. It's great to hear from you!

I have heard from Primary parents that the changes we have made to the programme for our younger children have been good, and have helped parents manage the balance between work and play that our little ones need. From College teachers, parents and students yesterday, there were a few comments around students finding it hard to manage the amount of work they had. This is pretty much as expected, and we will be working on getting a balance there too.

**So the theme for today is: let's tweak it together!**

In other words, it's a good opportunity for teachers, students and parents to have a collective moment of reflection about how the online environment is working for us all. We are still 'at school' next week, and we did this deliberately to make sure that we had the chance to work through our systems and make the small changes we needed for us all to be able to manage. I'm not talking about big changes at all: this is the structure we have in place, and it's a very solid one. This is about small changes that will keep us busy but not drive us mad.

So (and I apologise if what I am saying is obvious):

- 1. In Primary, think about the balance between work and play.** For parents (and many of our teachers are also looking after small children, so that means you too): your days will probably work best if you aim for defined periods of your own work, and periods with the children. We all know that it's almost impossible to manage both at the same time, so don't try.
- 2. In College, it's also about balance.** we have a clear timetable structure, and most children should be in most online lessons. But we have flexibility in our programme too, and we don't think that children can or should be learning in front of a computer screen for six hours at a time. We are fine with the children socialising too.
- 3. In all parts of the school, we are trying to make sure that there is not too much work for students to do.** I want us to be clear about something here: most students will not do as much work outside their lessons while we are online as they do when they are at school. That is fine. We are in a very unusual place right now, and we need to be kind to ourselves and to our children.

Two pieces of information for you:

1. A reminder that our Term 1 runs until the end of next week, April 3rd. This is so that we can embed our online learning and get close to finishing our Term 1 programmes. Then we have a two week holiday with no work at all! And Term 2 starts on April 20th. State schools are generally running a different schedule, but we are confident that this is the best pattern for us.

2. The May/June Cambridge exams have been cancelled. This does not affect many people at our school, and the October/November exams are not affected at all. We have been told that the May/June results will be awarded by using classwork marks, but we are still waiting to hear how that will work. Please be patient with this: as soon as we know, we will contact the affected students and parents.

Finally: I have asked my teachers not to do any work this weekend as they take a deep breath, think about what has worked and what needs tweaking, and get ready for next week's teaching. My advice to students (and parents!) is to do the same if you possibly can.

I am so proud of the Pinehurst community: I know, from conversations with other schools, that we are one of the leading schools in the country in the work that we are doing at the moment, and it is a huge collaborative effort: we're all doing this together. Keep writing to me and making positive comments and suggestions for improvement, and I know that we can continue to work well together.

Be kind to yourselves and to each other. And have fun!

Kia kaha  
Alex

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