



MALVERN

COLLEGE

Update 20 March 2020

Distance Learning for the Provision of Continued Education at Malvern College

Further to my previous communications, I write to confirm the arrangements for continued education at Malvern College.

As you are aware, lessons were suspended on Thursday 19th March 2020 to allow for pupils to travel home. I am pleased to confirm that lessons have recommenced today Friday 20th March 2020, via distance learning.

As of a week ago, we had already put in place a series of structures and plans, supported by a robust IT network and provision, to make sure that the academic curriculum, and therefore learning, may continue effectively for pupils who are not able to attend lessons at Malvern. We have successfully run this system for a large number of pupils in the past week who have accessed lessons and academic work remotely via Microsoft Teams, so, teaching staff have now had very valuable experience in distance teaching and feel confident in extending that to the whole school population.

Pupils will be able to continue with effective learning, based on the use of Microsoft Teams and OneNote as well as Malvern TV and a range of resources on Buzz for as long as proves necessary. Staff are very committed to the process of distance learning and individual academic departments have planned schemes and approaches to teaching and learning specific to their subjects which are focused on maintaining the excellent teacher/pupil learning relationships that exist at Malvern College. My thanks to all the staff who have spent a considerable amount of time preparing and planning in order to ensure that Malvern education continues uninterrupted.

1. Distance learning for all pupils at Malvern College

Teachers have set up Teams (using Microsoft Office 365) for each class and these provide an excellent platform for teaching, learning and effective communication and collaboration between pupils and their class teachers. All pupils will be able to access their timetabled lessons via Teams conference call. In this way they will be able to listen, contribute and respond during each lesson.

Teachers will post class materials (handouts, notes, photographed whiteboards, videos etc) to Teams/OneNote so that all pupils will be able to access the materials needed for that lesson and the materials needed to maintain a detailed note of the lesson.

Teaching and learning will continue by using the structures outlined above for all pupils, based on the following guidelines:

- All communications with teacher should be through Teams **NOT** email
- Lessons will operate according to usual lesson times (UK time). If pupils have a significant time difference, then they should contact teachers and consider adjusted arrangements with their teachers.
- Pupils should contact teachers during lesson time only
- Teachers will start lessons with a video conference **or** 'login' type activity. We will be keeping a record of pupils' lesson activity and teachers will contact pupils who are not observed being active at lesson times, contributing to lessons or completing assignments set
- Usual Hall timetable will apply for the Lower School and usual Hall setting practices will be followed by all teachers
- Teachers will use the 'Assignments' function in Teams not just to set Hall but to set tasks ahead of lessons

- For conference call/video lessons pupils should be appropriately dressed and should blur their backgrounds

In many instances, for Lower School classes particularly, the teaching will largely involve audio communication, rather than face-to-face video.

2. Preparation for internal and external examinations

Teaching will continue until the end of this term as outlined above. For next term, it is not clear yet exactly what the arrangements will be, as these will be hugely influenced by the Government. However, there will be some form of internal assessments arranged for all our pupils, and parents will continue to receive reports on their children's academic work.

We have already decided to move the Lower Sixth trial examinations for A level and IB to the second week of the Autumn Term. These examinations will test materials covered during the Summer Term and form the basis, alongside assessed work completed during the Summer Term, for predicted grades for university applications.

Once we have a better idea of how things might progress over the next few weeks, we will let pupils and parents know what arrangements are being made for internal assessment for the Foundation and Remove years.

Until we have detailed information from our IGCSE, GCSE, A level and IB examination providers about the inevitable significant changes to the usual pattern of public examinations this summer, we will continue to prepare our pupils for examinations. For example, earlier this morning a UK examination board spokesman indicated that it is possible that external examination candidates might be assessed internally and then externally moderated. We feel that rigorous internal assessments will provide pupils and parents with an indication of academic progress but might also be useful for employers and universities in the future. It is difficult to imagine a scenario in which internal assessments prove to be futile so pupils should continue to prepare as directed by their teachers and certainly should not feel that their hard work will go unrecognised.

Depending on the final decisions relating to the external examinations for IGCSE and GCSE, there are also opportunities to develop essential skills for Sixth Form courses, thus putting pupils in a strong position to commence the A Level or IB courses.

We strongly recommend that Upper Sixth pupils continue to attend lessons and complete work for the remainder of this term as earlier today universities suggested that they are considering, as an option, asking schools for evidence of student work in order to help in admissions decisions for the coming autumn. As soon as we have further information from the examination boards and government, we will clarify how pupils should proceed.

Upper Sixth

For Upper Sixth pupils who have not yet confirmed their university offers, we would advise them to firm up their preferred choice of university as soon as possible via UCAS. The reason for this is that it is possible that if universities decide to confirm offers based on the information that they already have about candidates, this could create a problem where they have over-offered, meaning that they might then prioritise applicants who have firmly accepted over those who have not yet confirmed the offer of a place that they have made.

I want to reassure the Upper Sixth and their parents that there will be a Leavers' Ball for pupils, parents and staff. We will confirm arrangements when it is clear that it is appropriate to do so.

Upper Sixth IB

All IB Diploma course content has been covered and revision schemes are being completed by the end of this term.

Pupils should continue with their revision, as planned, over the holiday in preparation for exam leave and the May IB examinations that start on 31st April. The IB will make a final decision on the May examinations by 27th March.

Upper Sixth A level

All examination course content will have been covered and revision schemes will have been in progress during the last weeks of the Lent term.

3. ICT Advice

ICT

Both pupils and teachers have been well trained in the use of the Teams/OneNote Microsoft platforms and our experience this week has been that lessons and learning has been able to continue, very effectively, for those pupils who have not been at Malvern College this past week.

Microsoft Teams now has well over 20 million daily users around the world. The recent Coronavirus pandemic means that a large number of those users will now be using Teams to communicate with their colleagues from home, not just messaging and sharing documents.

We imagine that this is therefore putting an unexpected strain on Microsoft's servers and therefore they will be having to do a lot of work in the background to reorganise various aspects of Teams and the Office 365 suite.

We anticipate that we will experience occasional glitches in service such as not being able to access assignments or files. The issues are not likely to be the same for everyone at the same time and might not affect people for the same length of time.

We can only ask you to grin and bear issues when and if they appear and, if possible, consider a workaround.

Limiting video conferencing where possible reduces the strain on bandwidth. Pupils can 'chat' via Teams and switch their camera off.

4. Safeguarding

Responsible use protocols for ICT and E-Safety for pupils are detailed in the College's "Policy on the Acceptable Use of ICT and E-Safety", which relates to the use of a range of technologies, including Virtual Learning Environments.

Students should not use social media to share lesson resources.

Appropriate information can be found on the Parent Portal under Parent Information.

Staff will be using the Malvern College systems which are password protected. Therefore, if pupils are contacted by 'a member of staff' who is not using this method they should assume this is not genuine contact.

We subscribe to a safety parent information service that is updated weekly. This service provides information about security setting and parental controls etc. It can be found [here](#).

All teachers teaching remotely, whether it be in a class setting or one-to-one, will be following our normal behavioural and acceptable use policies, as should all pupils. I would be grateful if parents would please support us in this by asking their children to work in communal areas of the home.

If a pupil does not appear to be accessing remote learning lessons and assignments, their tutor will contact their parents.

Please do continue to communicate with Houseems and tutors in the usual way if you have questions or concerns.



Keith Metcalfe
Headmaster