

## Parental Communication & Engagement



☎ 01384 816395 ✉ [info@dormston.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@dormston.dudley.sch.uk) 🐦 @DormstonSch 🌐 <http://www.dormston.dudley.sch.uk>

### Message from Head Teacher

I hope this bulletin finds you and your family safe and healthy. At the moment, nothing is as important as looking after each other and supporting those around us as best we can.

I hope this first week of 'virtual schooling' hasn't been too difficult and all of our students have taken responsibility for their own learning. Keeping to a routine will ensure students stay focused on their work and will make life so much easier when the normality of school begins again. I know that a few students are struggling to access work. The instructions for logging on to Go4Schools have been sent out in numerous letters preceding this update but we will send the instructions out again today.

Please do be as patient as possible when logging in as schools across the country are reporting some issues with on-line systems because of the number of students trying to access work. It may well be that subject teachers will email classes directly so all students should try to check their emails daily. The Heads of House and Curriculum Leaders will also be sending out emails, so it really is worth making regular daily checks. We are also planning to launch some competitions after Easter with great prizes on offer and you will be hearing more about this soon.

School remains open for the children of our key workers and we will endeavour to support these families in any way we can. I think the doctors, nurses, police, fire, supermarket workers, delivery drivers, (and the list goes on) are doing a fantastic job and I would hope that all of our students are showing their support by firstly **staying at home** but also getting involved if there is a chance to do so safely. Some of the Dormston staff have already signed up to be NHS volunteers and I am very proud of the effort and resilience they are demonstrating. I will give you more information and stories about how they are helping in weeks to come. I would love to hear stories of how the whole Dormston Community is getting involved and playing a part in fighting this horrible virus. Please let us know by emailing [kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk) and we will share some of these in this bulletin. Thank you for your support and please keep safe and well.

**Head Teacher**

### Emails/Letters Sent Out Recently

**ALL letters are now emailed home, hard copies are ONLY provided for 'Reply Slip' Letters.** \*Selected student only letters are given out to your child by hand or are posted directly home. The criterion for 'selected student only' opportunities are based on various factors depending on the trip and its focus. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow every student the opportunity to be involved with every activity which we understand sometimes causes disappointment. If you require more details about the selection process for any opportunity please contact the event organiser.

- Year 11 Strategy Leader Update Leader Letter - 25 March 2020;
- Year 7 - 10 Parent & Student Curriculum Briefing - 25 March 2020;

- Year 10 RE GCSE Exam & Future GCSE Preparation Letter - 26 March 2020.

## **Communication Plan**

In order to make sure that staff, students and parents all stay connected over the coming weeks/months we have mapped out a Communication Plan which we would like to share with you so that you know what to expect from us. If you have any ideas as to anything else we could do to make life easier for you as parents or students please email [kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk).

## **Head Teacher's Weekly Student Blog - Fridays**

Mr Dixon will be doing a Blog for students every week which will be published on the school website. We will embed this link into our Parent/Carer Weekly Bulletin. The aim of the blog is to keep Dormston School Community connected throughout the crisis.

## **Parent/Carer - Weekly Bulletin - Fridays**

These will continue as normal and will be a really good mechanism for staff to pass on any messages to parents/students. This will be published as usual to students and parents every Friday.

## **Student HoH Weekly Emails - Mondays**

Our HoH will be emailing students who are in their House every Monday. This is to try and encourage them to stay focussed and motivated. It will also touch on Mental Health and the Weekly PowerPoint. They will also be launching some fun competition for students to take part in so please make sure that your child is checking their emails regularly.

## **Student/Parent Curriculum Briefings - Wednesdays - Week 2**

This details set work and non-required work for each department for the next 2 weeks. It does not replace our current systems but helps students, parents and carers to plan ahead. This will be sent to Years 7 - 10 students and parents/carers on a Wednesday Week 2.

## **Form Tutor Keeping in Touch Emails - Mondays Week 2**

All Form Tutors will be emailing their Form just to check they are getting on ok on a Monday - Week 2.

## **Monthly Update Sheet - End of Month**

This will continue as normal but will have a stronger focus on Teaching & Learning tips for parents along with good news stories. Parents and staff will be asked to submit any good news stories for this. This seeks to be a positive and upbeat publication. Please send any good news stories that you would like to see shared with the Dormston community to [kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk)

## **Head Teaching Keeping in Touch Letters - As required**

These will be sent out as/when required as the situation dictates and will serve to update parents/carers in terms of the current COVID-19 situation.

## **Year 11 Exam Update Letters - As required**

Mrs Bassan will be making sure Year 11 students and parents/carers are kept up-to-date with exam results and other key information.

## **Safeguarding & Wellbeing Checks - Twice a Week/Weekly**

Additional arrangements are also in place for our most vulnerable students.

## **Teaching Hints & Tips**

We are enormously grateful for the support you are providing us by encouraging your child to study at home during these unprecedented times. It is very difficult to recreate a classroom environment whilst at home and, as many of our teaching staff with children may have come to realise, juggling supervision of work can be a battle - if like me you are somewhat baffled by Physics or Mathematics. Some of you will be dealing with the learning of Key Stage 3 students and some with Key Stage 4 - some with Primary schooling demands thrown into that mix as well. If you could encourage your child to stick to their school timetable wherever possible this may help. Teachers are on hand for advice and clarification and it is easy to bombard our students but the Curriculum Briefings you have received will have alleviated this somewhat. Here is a link to a BBC website for secondary school teaching that you or your child may wish to dip into at some point: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/secondary/zkqp47h>

## **The National Theatre at Home?**

The National Theatre are producing a series of live streams on Thursdays for the month of April and beyond. They can be streamed on YouTube free for seven days. Next week's offering is One Man, Two Guvnors - James Corden (Gavin and Stacey) won a Tony award for his role in this West End and Broadway hit. If you can get all your family together it's a great opportunity to watch a show from the comfort of your home. It streams from 7.00pm on Thursday 2nd April 2020 and is available until 9th April 2020.

Future shows include:

- Jane Eyre at 7.00pm on 9th April 2020 - available until 16th April 2020;
- Treasure Island at 7.00pm on 16th April 2020 - available until 23rd April 2020.

We will continue to update parents with this information.

## **Audio Books**

Good news for all parents. Audible online books narrated by well-known authors and actors is now free for students at home. If you have an Alexa at home your child can listen to endless stories to capture their imaginations. They can also listen to the titles on an app on their phone. The more our students read for pleasure, the more words they will be learning. We hope you find this helpful. Try to get them reading for 20 mins to an hour a day.

The audiobook platform has said that, for as long as schools are closed, anyone can listen to a vast selection of its titles. This means books read by Westworld's Thandie Newton and Downton Abbey's Dan Stevens are available to stream at no cost at all.

Simply visit [stories.audible.com](https://stories.audible.com) from any web browser to get started. No log-ins, credit card or passwords needed.

## **General Reminders/Updates**

### ▪ **IMPORTANT - Submission of Work by Students**

Students are **NOT** expected to email every piece of work back to their teacher for marking and feedback. **Teachers will state which pieces that they wish students to return.** Students need to save all other pieces in a folder (physical such as your exercise book/work folder, or in a folder on your computer), for each subject.

### ▪ **IMPORTANT - Free School Meal Vouchers**

We are in the process of e-mailing Asda vouchers to parents/carers of all our Free School Meal pupils. At the bottom of the email there is a link which will open the voucher – this can then either be printed or scanned in store. The vouchers cover the FSM entitlement for the period Monday 23 March - Friday 3 April 2020 and can be redeemed at any Asda store. We will contact you again after the Easter break regarding further vouchers. You will NOT be asked for your bank details in any way.

### ▪ **ParentPay Refunds**

All trips and payment items have been temporarily removed from ParentPay so that no further payments can be made. Parents/carers will get full refunds as and when we get confirmation that activities or trips have been cancelled. We are working very hard to refund any money to parents/carers as quickly as possible.