

Friday 25th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you know, very careful planning has gone into the re-opening of our school this September to ensure that we are able to provide a world-class education for our students whilst keeping them and our community safe. It has been our intention throughout to cause minimal disruption to our students' education during this difficult period so that they can continue to benefit from the aspects of Swan life that make our school special, including our rigorously academic curriculum, entitlement to enrichment, family dining, and clear routines/behaviour expectations.

Due to changing Covid-19 advice from the government and as we familiarise ourselves with our new routines and building, we are constantly reviewing the measures that we have put in place. **As part of this review, we have decided to make the difficult decision to cancel our extended day from Monday 5 October 2020 until the Christmas break. During this period the school will finish at 3.40pm every day. This change will bring the length of our school day in line with other schools (we currently teach for approximately 3 hours longer per week). Curriculum lessons will not be affected - only electives and supervised study will be removed.** We feel that this is the best way to ensure that children get the most out of their time in school in the current circumstances. Although we have not yet had any significant issues, we are learning from the experience of other schools and want to be proactive in our decision-making so that the student experience does not suffer.

We have made this decision for the following reasons:

- **Student tiredness** - Students currently remain in one classroom for almost all of their lessons. Without the ability to stretch their legs and have a change of scene between lessons, we have noticed that many of our children are extremely tired by the end of the day. We do not feel that they are currently learning to the best of their ability during period 6 due to fatigue. They would be better placed to leave school earlier, have a short break and continue their independent study at home.
- **Increased Covid risk** - Electives on Monday/Tuesday involve students working in different groups and moving between classrooms. Although we have put measures in place to ensure this is as safe as possible, given the national picture with infection rates, we feel it is important to eliminate unnecessary risk where we can.
- **Maintaining high quality lessons** - We know from our own experience and looking at other schools that staff absence is likely to be high over this period. At the Swan, we cover all lessons internally, rather than relying on external cover teachers, to ensure that we maintain high quality teaching and a purposeful environment even when staff are absent. Removing the extended day means that we have more staff time available to cover colleagues where necessary. This is extremely beneficial for students' learning.
- **Staff wellbeing** - There are significantly increased pressures on staff workload at the current time, which are only likely to increase if groups of students have to be asked to learn from home because staff will be required to teach both in person and online. Shortening the school day is one way that we can help reduce staff workload with minimal impact on student outcomes. As a school we prioritise staff wellbeing because we know that staff who are less stressed will be better able to deliver a really high quality education.

We will expect students to work independently on their homework (self-quizzing, reading for pleasure, MangaHigh) during their additional time at home. They should spend *approximately* 1 hour working independently each evening:

- Self-quizzing/MangaHigh - 30-60 minutes
- Reading for pleasure - at least 20 minutes

We intend to use our supervised study periods next week to reinforce with students how to quiz effectively using the resources we have provided. We will also be circulating a video and guidance for parents about how you can support your child's self-quizzing at home. Teachers will continue to check homework completion during the one remaining supervised study session on Wednesday week A, period 5.

We understand that this change may have childcare implications for some parents so we will also be offering a supervised 'homework club' between 3.40 and 4.35pm on Monday to Thursday.

Parents who wish their child to stay for homework club will need to register using [this form](#) by Friday 2nd October.

We will review the situation in light of national and local guidance during the Christmas holidays. It is with a heavy heart that we have had to make this decision but we know that we will be able to return to the full Swan experience eventually. We are sure that you understand that, like other schools, we have had to make difficult decisions at the moment, but wish to reassure you that they have not been made lightly. We will continue to work with you in our students' best interests.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wood', with a horizontal line underneath.

Ms K. Wood (Headteacher)