



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

Headteacher Matthew Brown BA(Hons) DMS(Ed)

Blackfen School for Girls,
Blackfen Road,
Sidcup, Kent.
DA15 9NU

T: 020 8303 1887

F: 020 8298 1656

E: admin@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk
www.blackfenschoolforgirls.co.uk

22nd October 2020

REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, thank you for your continuing collaboration with the school in the midst of unsettling media reports about the control of the Covid-19 virus. The resolve of Blackfen parents and carers to send their children to school on a regular basis and to support our new 'safe school' routines has generated a positive and purposeful vibe to the start of the academic year. I also admire the endeavours of our teachers, devising the resources and means to deliver 'normal' lessons whilst working in taxing circumstances. They are not able to teach in some of their usual classrooms and have to plan and mark in separated work spaces, as staff rooms and department offices have been closed to reduce contact between adults. Behind the scenes, the site team maintains our Covid-control cleaning procedures throughout the day and administration teams ensure that a school of 1400 students and 200 staff runs smoothly and efficiently. Thus, working together, Blackfen parents and staff are reinventing 'school' but retaining the 'Blackfen' values and principles which we believe our students and young people deserve to experience.

As we continue to navigate the new 'normal' day in school, I would draw to your attention the school's [Remote Learning policy](#) in the 'Policies' section of the website. The policy addresses the continuation of students' education in the context of individual or group self-isolation or during school closure as directed by public health guidance.

I recommend that you read the policy in full, particularly the details in Section 2 and the Appendices (attached to this email), which set out the school's expectations of parents, students and teachers during a period of remote learning. The policy incorporates feedback from parents and students about their experience of working at home, last term, as well as input from subject leaders and teachers. In summary, teachers are responsible for setting remote learning which aligns closely to curriculum delivery in school, in order to minimise the interruption to students' education as a result of self-isolation or directed school closure; parents and carers are responsible for organising their child to do remote learning at home and students are responsible for completing remote learning, under the direction of their parents and carers.

Remote learning is not a replacement for learning in school and teachers cannot teach remotely in the same way as they do in school. The countless interactions between student and teacher in subject-based classrooms are the nucleus of effective teaching and learning. We endorse the view of the Department for Education in its guidance document to schools, 'Remote education



good practice (1.10.20) that the '*characteristics of good teaching are more important than the medium of delivery*'. This is the reason why the school expects teachers to use their professional judgement to decide the medium or style of subject delivery for each of their classes. However, we have also kept in mind the views of parents that students responded positively during school closure to following their teachers' input, whether live or pre-recorded. Therefore, in a period of full school closure that continues beyond two weeks, teachers will upload live 'Learning Updates' in Microsoft Teams of about 15 minutes, at least once, during the 4-week teaching timetable cycle.

The school does not consider parents and carers to be teachers of their children but we are asking parents to recognise the importance of their child's continuing education at home and to work with teachers to make remote learning effective. Having answered your phone calls and listened to your feedback, first-hand, last term, I know the daunting nature of this request. Parents and carers were placed under significant pressure to manage children of different school-ages at home, whilst working from home themselves and supporting the needs of partners and wider family. It is only through the mutual determination of families and teachers to support our children while they learn at home, that the expectations of remote learning can be achieved. Please check the contact details in the policy's Appendices, so that you know the best person to provide support and advice, as necessary.

Students can expect to be sanctioned if they do not complete the remote learning set by their teachers. During short-term absence due to self-isolation, S2 sanction points will be added to their Behaviour records if remote learning is not completed. Students are accountable for the completion of their own remote learning, to the best of their ability, as is the case when they are working in school. They do not have the option not to complete the remote learning set by their teachers. Parents are required to manage the completion of late or missing work by their child.

I suggest that you take time to read and discuss the expectations of the Remote Learning policy with your daughter or son and the arrangements for the continuation of their education at home, should this action be directed by the school. It has been a successful but challenging half term and while I am grateful for your work to support the school, I also trust that you and your family will take time to rest and enjoy a well-deserved break.

Yours faithfully,



Miss F Minnis
Deputy Headteacher

