

11th February 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Re: half term update

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to all our families who completed the remote learning survey last week and the ongoing support you have given your children throughout this lockdown. We know that there are many families who are finding things very difficult at the moment, particularly with home schooling and working at the same time.

We completely understand this and we want you to know how grateful we are for everything you are doing during this difficult time.

As ever, if there is anything we can do to support you, please do not hesitate to contact us. We received 368 responses to the remote learning survey, with about 25% from students and 75% from parents/carers with all year groups contributing to the survey.

A summary of the survey results made from families are as follows:

- The comments we received on our current remote learning provision was extremely positive, with many families thanking staff for their hard work. Almost 72% of respondents agreed that remote learning was going well at Phoenix. This compared to the recent national survey where it was significantly lower at around 60%.
- However, many families commented that the amount of screen time with our current provision was becoming overwhelming. In addition, they found that their children were complaining of back pain, eye strain and headaches.
- Those families that felt it was not going well thought there should be more live lessons and some live lessons were being cancelled.
- 69% of respondents agreed that the level of work set in live lessons was about right with 19% disagreeing.
- With regard the question about the amount of work set for students, just over 51% said it was about right, 23 % said it was too much work at the moment with 12% saying too little work is provided.
- It was interesting to note that 67% of respondents said that teachers gave valuable feedback. 17% of respondents said that they did not know.
- Some families commented that there should be no additional homework, though some wished for more.
- Some parents/carers/students commented that some lessons were too fast and did not allow time for students to complete their work.

In addition, there were some comments made that indicated clarity was needed about our provision:

- Some families mentioned that it would be better for students if they were able to turn on their cameras. This is absolutely fine and we encourage our students to do so! However, students must be dressed appropriately with a neutral background.
- A few families said that their child did not seem to be producing much work and whether they were being set enough. There should be enough work for the student to complete in the time remaining of the lesson following teacher input.

Please ask your child to show you what was set for them in each lesson on Teams and if you have any concerns, please contact their House team in the first instance.

We will ask all teachers to be more prescriptive where possible to give you an indication of how much work should be produced for each task.

- Feedback may be carried out verbally in lessons (instant, live feedback) or in written form. Written feedback may be on Teams or on subject specific platforms. This could possibly be a reason why some parents/carers felt that there was not enough feedback for their children.
- Some families commented that lessons are not lasting the full hour. This is intentional. Whilst our school lessons are 55 minutes or 1 hour long we have asked staff to give end a lesson before the set time so that there is a short break between each lesson, similar to a lesson finishing and students then moving to another classroom. This gives time for students to move out of their seat for a quick break before going to the next lesson.
- If a teacher is unwell and cannot deliver a live lesson, work will be set on Teams for the students to complete. This may also take the form of a pre-recorded lesson from another teacher in that subject.

As we are working remotely, we are unable to have external supply staff who would know what they need to do to deliver lessons with our set up of Teams. All of our in-house cover supervisors who we would usually use to cover lessons are currently in school supervising critical worker and vulnerable students so that teachers can focus on teaching online.

There are still a small number of families struggling to cope with a phone or no device at all. We have secured a significant number of laptops via the government which can be loaned to support your child so please contact the school if this is still an issue.

Yesterday we introduced a screen free day to help give your child a break where they could complete five short tasks across the day which may support their wellbeing. The initial feedback I have received has been so heart-warming. We will be reviewing this with staff very shortly as should the lockdown continue towards the summer, we may introduce a regular wellbeing session. Please share what students did during the day via screenfree@phoenixcollegiate.co.uk

Hopefully when we return after half term we may have a much clearer picture on the road out of this lockdown and possible timescales.

It is nice to share some good news, which is great during these difficult times. This month work begins to further develop our site which includes:

- an addition outdoor covered area for students,
- astroturfed areas between A and B block so students have more space at break and lunchtimes,
- we begin to start the work to reinstate our all-weather running track, making it 7 lanes to be able to accommodate every house for sports days etc,
- later this year we will begin substantial development on our playing fields with two new football pitches with proper drainage being created.

Finally some reminder for what is happening next half term:

- Thursday 25th February: KS5 Parents evening 4pm - 7pm (virtual via schoolcloud)
- Thursday 11th March: Year 10 Parents evening 4pm - 7pm (virtual via schoolcloud)
- Thursday 25th March: Year 11 Parents evening 4pm - 7pm (virtual via schoolcloud)
- Easter Holidays begin on Friday 2nd April.

Please note that school will be closed to all students during half-term. Enjoy the break from the screens once again and I hope that you all have a great half-term.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Smith
Head teacher