



8th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Principal's Update – Spring Term 1

As I did last year, I will again provide a weekly update during the period of school closure.

I have been very pleased to hear how engaged students have been in live lessons this week. Overall, attendance has been good, but I know that some students either did not or could not participate as they should have. We have now loaned approximately 100 laptops and do not have any more readily available. However, if you are still in need, please email lee.harkness@riddlesdown.org and we will continue to try to source more if necessary. In addition, the Department for Education has announced a [scheme](#) which temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks in order to support young people during the period of remote learning. To make a request, please complete the details here: <http://tctorg.uk/c19-extradata>.

I hope that as we change our remote learning provision next week to reflect its long-term nature, everyone will benefit. In my [letter](#) earlier this week, I outlined some of the key reasons for the changes we are making:

- we are responding to educational research;
- we are providing greater flexibility to teachers, students and their families;
- we are facilitating sharing of devices between family members.

We are also avoiding students and teachers spending whole days in front of a screen and thus trying to support their physical wellbeing. Together with the work set in Google Classroom for all non-live lessons, students should, on average, have 5 hours of remote learning in total, per day. We shall continue to review how effectively these arrangements are working and suggest any further changes in time, if appropriate.

It has been a challenging start to the new year, but as we come to the end of our first week, I am feeling confident about the arrangements we have put in place so far and grateful for the messages of appreciation and support we have received. None of us want to be operating in these ways. However, we have been in a similar position before and now we have the experience to manage the challenges even more effectively and deliver even stronger provision and quality of learning.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Dey
Principal