



## Principals' Letter – Spring Term 2021 Week Ending 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

We have written to you a lot this week so we'll keep it as short as possible. When we wrote to Year 11 families earlier in the week we promised an update on what the government has said about the summer; sadly the only news that has been released is that it is likely to be the end of February before any official announcements are made. This means we will be prepared for all eventualities and keep covering their exam content throughout the lockdown.

It has been really lovely to get feedback from so many of you about how home learning is going and we will continue to listen and to learn as we manage lockdown life and teaching. We can see how much time and effort is already being put in to home learning by our families and we will be sharing this with you over the next few weeks.

January is not always the most joyful month of the year and this will be one of the hardest. Below you will see a calendar from Action for Happiness which may give you some ideas about how to tackle the next few days and weeks. It can be easy to see someone that is kind as a pushover however no one should ever mistake kindness for weakness. As we've seen in America over recent days staying kind is often not the easy option.

**ACTION CALENDAR: HAPPIER JANUARY 2021**

MONDAY    TUESDAY    WEDNESDAY    THURSDAY    FRIDAY    SATURDAY    SUNDAY

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony" - Gandhi

- 1 Find three good things to look forward to this year
- 2 Make time today to do something kind for yourself
- 3 Do a kind act for someone else to help to brighten their day
- 4 Write a list of things you feel grateful for in life and why
- 5 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths
- 6 Take five minutes to sit still and just breathe
- 7 Learn something new and share it with others
- 8 Say positive things to the people you meet today
- 9 Get moving. Do something physically active (ideally outdoors)
- 10 Thank someone you're grateful to and tell them why
- 11 Switch off all your tech 2 hours before bedtime
- 12 Connect with someone near you - share a smile or chat
- 13 Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes
- 14 Take a different route today and see what you notice
- 15 Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today
- 16 Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful
- 17 Contribute positively to a good cause or your community
- 18 Focus on what's good, even if today feels tough
- 19 Get back in contact with an old friend you miss
- 20 Go to bed in good time and give yourself time to recharge
- 21 Take a small step towards an important goal
- 22 Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone
- 23 Plan something fun and invite others to join you
- 24 Put away digital devices and focus on being in the moment
- 25 Decide to lift people up rather than put them down
- 26 Say hello to a neighbour and get to know them better
- 27 Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside
- 28 Ask other people about things they've enjoyed recently
- 29 Use one of your personal strengths in a new way
- 30 Count how many people you can smile at today
- 31 Write down your hopes or plans for the future

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS** [www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Learn more about this month's theme at [www.actionforhappiness.org/happier-january](http://www.actionforhappiness.org/happier-january)

**Happier · Kinder · Together**

We, like you, want the infection rate in Harlow to drop and to get back to normality as soon as possible. Please stay well.

This may be of use to some families:

## How to Access Microsoft Teams

### On Xbox Consoles (One/Series X/S)

1. Plug a wired keyboard into your Xbox
2. Press the Xbox button top-centre of your controller
3. Go to 'My games & apps' in the side menu
4. Click on 'see all', scroll down to 'apps'
5. Open Microsoft Edge
6. Type 'Microsoft Teams' into the URL bar
7. Log in using your College account

### On Play Station (PS4/5)

1. Open the web browser first
2. Plug a wired keyboard and/or mouse into the USB ports
3. In the URL bar of the browser, type 'Microsoft Teams'
4. Log in using the your College account



### New Year's Reflection From Miss Banks:

Now more than ever our kindness is going to play an important part in keeping people safe, if we reflect on last year and the things we did, I hope you can feel proud in the sacrifices you made, the help you gave to make life easier for your loved ones at home or your shielding family.

I can say that the choices I made helped to me to reflect as a person, the importance of slowing down, appreciating the little things and how material items are not as important as health and time spent with family.

Even though it is a new year we should not forget the things we did to help and to be kind in 2020, little did I know that I would still be keeping people safe, by shopping, running errands, doorstep drops

of homemade cake and picking up the phone to talk. These are the things that I will continue with when we get out of this. My family and I provided our family friends a Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. A small act of kindness to people in need will go far. What can you do this year? You might surprise yourself.

It is not too late to plan your resolutions for the year, you have already been asked this in form time this week, perhaps you could find someone who needs help or even a 'hi' as you pass them on your daily walk. That small contact you have with that individual could make their day. Have a think and write them down, what could you do to help around the house? I am sure any help will be much appreciated.

It is now more important to be mindful of others and how they are feeling. It's good to talk, a problem shared is a problem halved. Miss Banks

**SAMLEARNING:** It is great to see students using Samlearning to fill in any gaps in time when they finish early in lessons. All of these students have used the site for two hours this week, showing real commitment to high standards

[Erikume, Ella](#)

[Boorman, Angel](#)

[Yeoman, Libby](#)

[Sivathanu, Priya](#)

[Pannell, Freddie](#)

[Dorrington, Harry](#)

[Polat, Lucas](#)

[Clark, Nathan](#)

[Lutwyche, Hannah](#)

[Hainsworth, Imi](#)

[Cooper, James](#)

[Gilberg, Jessica](#)

[Jones, Megan](#)

[Clark, Charleigh-Faye](#)

[Clark, Lola](#)

[Martin, Charlie](#)

[Peacock, Maisie](#)

[Peirce, Aaron](#)

[Shaw, Holly](#)

[Wyatt, Holly](#)

[Yussif, Matin](#)

[Wyatt, Grace](#)

**English Department:** The following extract is from Lauren Fearon's short story (Year 8). I am sure you will agree, it is a lovely read.

I was introduced into the most wonderful island I have ever graced my eyes on. Trees swept down to protect us from the burning sunlight and a waterfall poured and flooded the whole island giving every layer a healthy amount of water and lakes. There were a few mysteries about that island like how the sun was so far away; however, the minute you stepped outside the ship you got an instant tan! Or how, if you placed your feet in the crystal blue waters, it would feel shallow but, if you placed your head under the water, it would go down and down and down. It was no illusion either - you could swim under those reefs for centuries! The strangest thing about the waters was that you did not need oxygen to swim under the surface! It was like the master that created the planet's seas wanted all to see it: to have the powers of a god!

After a long stroll around the island, I found something extraordinary: a little cottage! On a human-free island! Seconds later, after the cottage's strange appearance, I saw another surprise! The boy from the ship! He came charging at me, grabbed my shoulders and said, 'I'm so sorry for not introducing myself properly!' He was still panting when words leapt out of his mouth: 'I go by Yukio! Yukio Naoki!' It was the strangest name I had ever heard...

**Safeguarding:** With many students working online at the moment and using electronic devices to also play games and access content, we have decided to include some information for parents and students about a variety of online platforms and games as well as offering parents some advice too. With this in mind, here are the first two posters in a series of posters we will be sending over the coming weeks. The two posters are poignant at the moment as they relate to Online Learning. Please note, the student poster mentions student wearing school uniform, we are not expecting students to be wearing uniform at home!

The posters have been designed by the National Online Safety organisation, here is the link <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/> They have a mobile app for parents you may wish to download and use? We hope you find the posters useful in highlighting some of the issues associated with the various games and platforms.

# REMOTE EDUCATION 10 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

Remote education ensures continuous learning outside the classroom. For parents and carers, remote education isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote education experience.

## 1. TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

As a parent or carer, your school may have explained how remote education works already, but children may still need help. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.



## 2. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNICATION AND ONLINE ACTIVITY

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.



## 3. ESTABLISH A DAILY SCHEDULE AND ROUTINE

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.



## 4. ENCOURAGE SCREEN BREAKS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AWAY FROM DEVICES

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teachers will invariably advise on screen breaks; however, it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.



## 5. ENSURE YOUR LEARNING DEVICE IS IN PUBLIC SPACE IN THE HOME

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral, with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate.



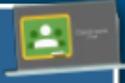
## 6. IMPLEMENT SAFETY CONTROLS AND PRIVACY RESTRICTIONS ON APPS AND SOFTWARE

Dependant on how your school implements remote education, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.



## 7. ENSURE YOUR CHILD ONLY USES OFFICIAL SCHOOL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.



## 8. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

Schools should have a policy on remote education that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.



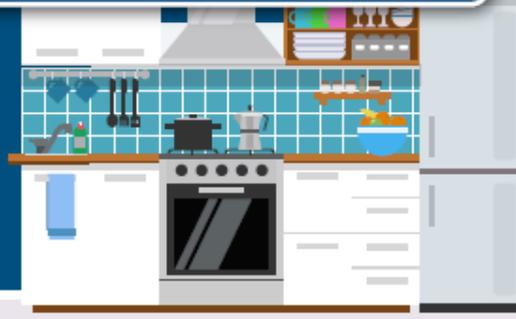
## 9. MAINTAIN FEEDBACK WITH TEACHERS

Engage in communication with teachers where possible, and try to feed back progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.



## 10. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Remote education will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as they can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start with, missing out on seeing their friends every day might take its toll.



# REMOTE EDUCATION 10 TOP TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Remote education ensures continuous learning outside the classroom. For students, it's the perfect way to ensure they still get the education they need, despite not being at school. However, it also requires a level of discipline and careful planning. That's why we've created this guide to help pupils understand different aspects of remote education and to support them in ensuring their experience is as safe and secure as it can be.

## 1. TREAT REMOTE EDUCATION THE SAME AS CLASSROOM LEARNING

Despite being at home, it's important to remember the same rules apply as being in the classroom, particularly in respect of behavior and conduct. Focus on learning and don't get distracted by your surroundings.



## 2. USE CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

If you are encouraged to communicate through emails and online messages, don't use shorthand text speak and write as though you would speak in class. Remember to be respectful and polite and avoid posting negative comments or spamming the chat.



## 3. TAKE REGULAR SCREEN BREAKS

Whilst remote education might be an exciting experience to begin with, having prolonged periods of time in front of a screen isn't always healthy. Remember to have regular screen breaks where possible and in your spare time, try to get some fresh air and enjoy other activities away from electronic devices.



## 4. ALWAYS CONDUCT VIDEO LEARNING IN AN OPEN SPACE AT HOME

To get the best experience from remote education, it's important to create the right environment around you. Try to set up a mock 'classroom desk' at home in an open space so parents can supervise if necessary. Avoid bedrooms as this could be considered inappropriate.



## 5. ONLY COMMUNICATE THROUGH APPROVED SCHOOL PORTALS AND PLATFORMS

It's important that you send messages and any pictures or images required for class through approved school channels, such as internal learning portals or approved platforms. This will help to keep your personal information safe and secure.



## 6. STICK TO TEACHER RULES AND GUIDELINES AROUND REMOTE EDUCATION

Your school should issue you with guidance on remote education and the rules to follow. Always maintain classroom behaviour and try to remember that you are in a learning environment and not a social setting.



## 7. DRESS IN SCHOOL UNIFORM

As part of your learning environment, try to maintain school uniform/dress. This will help as part of replicating classroom learning in the home. Try to avoid wearing anything too casual as this could be deemed inappropriate for school.



## 8. DON'T SHARE PASSWORDS OR OTHER SENSITIVE INFORMATION

In order to begin your online lessons or to gain access to learning materials, you may be provided with login details and passwords. In the same way you keep your personal details private, always keep these safe and never share them with others.



## 9. DON'T USE SCHOOL PLATFORMS TO DISCUSS PERSONAL MATTERS.

It's important to keep your school communication channels separate from your own personal communication with friends and family. Don't be tempted to engage in casual discussions or send images, videos or links via official school apps or platforms that aren't associated with your learning.



## 10. LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

Remote education ultimately means working alone and missing out on daily social interaction with your friends. If you ever feel frustrated, low or sad, it's important to discuss how you feel with your parents or your teacher. Keeping in touch with friends over the phone or on social media can also help to keep your spirits up.



**Year 11:** The link below is to support parent and carers with students who are looking at their next steps.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j79gyTqhzH6ikWVWJzUgEStxyySbA91v/view?goal=0\\_075a5d0dae-dd21ab1156-212116636&mc\\_cid=dd21ab1156&mc\\_eid=36ec35cd30](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j79gyTqhzH6ikWVWJzUgEStxyySbA91v/view?goal=0_075a5d0dae-dd21ab1156-212116636&mc_cid=dd21ab1156&mc_eid=36ec35cd30)



Natalie Christie & Vic Goddard  
**Co-Principals of Passmores Academy**

TEACHarlow

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Interested in becoming a primary or secondary teacher?  
Contact Gareth Walsh on [g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com](mailto:g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com)