

16 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, let me start by saying that I hope that your child has had an enjoyable first couple of weeks with us at Oakmoor. I have to say how impressed we have all been with the attitude of all of year 7. They look incredibly smart in their school and PE uniform and have made a great start in lessons.

I am writing to request your continued support with your child's education and specifically regarding remote or home learning. This letter will be sent electronically and through the post.

In light of the Coronavirus and as we continue to adapt to our new way of living, working together to achieve the very best outcomes for your children, our students, has never been more important.

Throughout the summer we have been working hard to prepare for every eventuality and over the coming months we will need to continue to be prepared to adapt the way that we deliver our curriculum. As we have seen this week with Year 7 needing to be off school, this can happen quickly, so we will need to work together to ensure that the children have access to the work that they need and to make sure that you are aware of what we are setting. The systems that we already have in place worked well during the summer term and we have already started building on them to further improve our provision. This could involve a mixture of lessons in school, live online lessons and other independent tasks.

In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for all students and alongside the traditional way of teaching, we will use Satchel One – Show My Homework (SMHW) and Microsoft Teams. Ideally if students can have access to a computer at home to work on would it would make this easier, but both of these systems can also run on mobile phones and tablets. Some members of staff are already using Teams with some classes as part of our pilot. More information will follow on how we will use this system to further support home learning.

As mentioned above and as many of you will know, we use Satchel One - SMHW at Oakmoor School. So as to avoid any confusion, Satchel One was previously known as Show My Homework, but they have recently changed their name. You can find the link to the site at the bottom of our school website. Staff use Satchel One - SMHW to set all home learning tasks.

To make things easier, different tasks are colour coded. Please see the 'Satchel One – SMHW Colour Guide' at the end of this letter for a list of the types of homework that staff can use.

Statistics show that on average, students that engage with 2 hours of homework each night are more likely to succeed in their education. Along with better qualifications, engaging in home learning will also develop important life skills, such as organisation, self-motivation, resilience and work ethic, all of which will help them to become successful in their lives beyond Oakmoor School.

To help you keep up to date with your child's education, I have enclosed your personal log in details for SMHW which will give you all of the information that your child will need to complete their homework. I strongly recommend that you download the 'Satchel One app' as it will allow you to receive notifications on what homework is being set, when it is due in and even receive feedback from staff on the quality of work your child has produced. In addition, if your child uploads their work to SMHW, you will receive a notification telling you that they have completed it. If work is not completed staff will follow up with your child and, if necessary you, to ensure that they don't fall behind in their work. Most importantly and perhaps the simplest thing that you can do to help support us is by having a conversation about the importance of trying their best with class and homework, being organised and striving to meet their full potential. For additional information please click the link below to view a short SMHW parent guide:

<https://teamsatchel.wistia.com/medias/1x7nnmlskh>

Students have had an introduction from me on our homework expectations and have already been given their log in details for SMHW. A lot of students have also downloaded the app and are finding it really useful in planning their time and meeting their deadlines. For those who are struggling, please know that we are here to help. To start with, the students guide below might be helpful. Failing that, please ask your child to contact their mentor for further assistance.

<https://teamsatchel.wistia.com/medias/dh00d23bj#>

In addition, as a staff team, we have all received a training session to enable us all to set homework on this system. Staff are expected to set all homework on Satchel One and mark whether it has been completed. Staff also have the option of adding an 'Attitude to Home Learning' (ATL) score. This scoring system is in line with how we assess attitude to class and home learning and is fed back to you in the termly reports. We use the following grading system when reporting ATLs; 1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Requires Improvement, 4 = Poor. This is not compulsory for staff, but is available to staff if they wish to use it to provide additional information.

Additional written guidance is available on our website. Like the videos above, this has been put together by Satchel One. Please click this link below to take you to the relevant page:

<https://www.oakmoor.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=Show+My+Homework&pid=148>

Although I did make it clear when I spoke to students, I appreciate that some children might not be too keen on you having all of their homework information at your fingertips! I also appreciate that using technology isn't everyone's cup of tea, but it would be a shame for you to miss out on this fantastic opportunity. Therefore, if you need help logging onto this system, getting your app set up on your phone or in learning how to navigate the website, please contact us at school and we will do all that we can to support you.

We have been extremely pleased with the positive effect that full engagement in home learning has had on progress in recent years and we know that, with your support, together we can continue to make even more of a difference to your child's education. In turn, this will provide them with better qualifications and improved life chances.

If at any point your child is off school, please contact our school office to let us know why as quickly as possible. If your child is off school because of the need for your family to self-isolate or for any other reason that your child is unable to attend school, but are well enough to work, please ensure that they follow their daily school timetable and complete the 'Classwork' and then other tasks set on SMHW. This will prevent your child from falling behind in their learning.

We enjoy excellent working relationships with our parents and we believe in working closely in partnership with you to achieve a common aim of maximising your child's potential. We will always work together to resolve any problems that arise, so please don't hesitate to contact your child's mentor or teacher if you need any support.

Finally, you may have already received an email inviting you to join ePraise. This is a new system that we have implemented this year. Part of our package allows staff the opportunity to recognise excellent engagement from our students by awarding them points. Students collect these, earning badge achievements and giving them an opportunity to use their points to select various awards. If you have not received this email, it is possible that your email address might not be correct on our system. If this is the case, please can I ask that you contact us at school so that we can update our records.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter.

Yours sincerely



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Satchel One – SMHW Homework Task Colour Guide

Below are a list of the different options that staff can use when setting work using Satchel One – SMHW. Each option is presented as a different colour to highlight the different types of work, which is also shown in the student calendar.

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 Assignment

- Assignment tasks are the most commonly used task. Homework tasks will be set using this option.
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 Differentiated

- Differentiated tasks allow staff the opportunity to set different levels of work according to the differing levels of ability within each class. This can be particularly helpful when looking to stretch learning to the next level. Staff will also differentiate using the green assignment option, but need to write the different levels into the task instead. Staff can choose which option is more appropriate to their class and the task that they are setting.
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 Classwork

- The classwork task has been developed following our first lockdown. We will be using this to set classwork for students who are unable to be in school. Providing they are well enough to do so, there will be an expectation that students will continue to complete classwork from home, so as not to fall behind with their learning. This might be used for individual children, classes or year groups depending on the scenario. Homework will also continue to be set in addition to classwork. **Students who remain in lessons at school will not have to complete any work set in this colour as they will have already completed it by attending lessons.**
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 Flexible task

- Flexible tasks were introduced to allow an option for staff to communicate with students and parents. We use this function for mentor work, notices and to set extra-curricular or optional extension tasks that are additional to the set learning. All students should read all flexible tasks, but not all will be compulsory. This will depend on the content.
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 Spelling test

- Spelling tests give staff the opportunity to focus on subject specific words that our students need to know about and spell. This links directly to our literacy drive and is a really important homework task. Each word will be spoken and the student will have three attempts to spell the word. Headphones are useful for this type of homework. Students will receive a percentage score according to how well they have done at the end of the test.
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 Quiz

- A quiz a good way to test the information that students have been able to retain and recall. Staff might choose to use this function at the end of a topic test. Students will receive a percentage score according to how well they have done at the end of the test.
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 Class test

- Class test allow staff the opportunity to provide our students (and parents) with all of the information and reminders that they need to prepare for an upcoming test.

Often the simple things can make a big difference and parents have told us that the following approaches work really well;

- Use the Satchel One App to keep up to date on what homework is being set and when it needs to be completed by to ensure that it is handed in on time
- Setting a regular time every day for homework
- Setting a good example by reading and writing yourself
- Stay in touch with your child's teachers and please ask when you need help. Lockdown taught us that no one can be an expert in all subject areas but by working as a team we are able to support you in supporting your child
- Ensure that your child has all of the equipment that they might need to complete assignments
- Where possible, provide a quiet working environment where your child can concentrate on their homework without interruptions. To support this we will be starting homework club within the coming week. This will allow students to attend a supervised study session in our LRC to allow them to complete their homework. They will also have computer and internet access in this club to support them.

Provide guidance:

- Understand and respect your child's style of learning
- Does your child work better alone or with someone else? Do they learn best when they can see things, hear them or handle them?
- Help your child to get organised. Students will have a 'to do' list on Satchel One which helps them to learn to keep on top of their work
- Guide your child to learn how to be organised. Pack their bag the night before with all of the equipment that they need, including checking that any homework that is due in has been uploaded to Satchel One or emailed to their teacher
- Encourage your child to develop good study habits (eg scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests)
- Talk with your child about homework assignments and check that they understand them
- Make sure that your child understand plagiarism (copying) and its consequences
- Talk with someone at school when problems arise
- Support your child's teacher/s and your child's learning by helping them to work out a plan and a schedule to fix homework problems