

Remote Learning

Dear Parents,

As we all get used to a new way of working at home (where possible), supporting remote learning for our children and trying to keep our everyday lives on track, we will be putting huge demands on the internet bandwidth available to us.

As expected, we have experienced teething issues with some of the technology and we have been very appreciative of all the parents that have been in touch to share their expertise. The following information has kindly come from Mr Cuthbertson to help explain the technological challenges which may be presenting for everyone learning and working at home:

Connected services like Zoom, Microsoft team and Skype will be under lots of pressure this week. There will be a huge number of adults and children trying to use them all at the same time. The way these services operate when they get close to capacity is by only allowing a maximum number of connections into their servers at any one time. They do this to make sure that if you've got a connection and a meeting up and running, the bandwidth at their end (on their servers) is maintained for the people that are already having a meeting. Unfortunately, this means that anyone else trying to get in and start a new meeting will be refused entry. It's a bit like a busy nightclub. If you're in, you're in. If you're not, you're waiting in the line outside. It'll be a one-in, one-out policy. If you're lucky and find yourself trying to start a meeting at the same point as someone else is finishing one you'll get a connection. In practical terms, this means that a lot of people might not get to start a meeting, especially at busy times. And this week will be the busiest of all we expect, with all adults and children trying to get online at the same time.

For School to maintain its safeguarding protocols, only staff should host **official** timetabled Zoom meetings, otherwise they will not have a clear idea of who is in and who is out of the meeting or when they have joined. As the 'host', staff can do things like manage mute controls for everyone who joins a meeting – which we are sure you'll appreciate will be important with a class full of excited children! For that reason, we ask parents to discourage children from starting their own meeting or use messaging/emoji options when it is the time for their class to **officially** meet. Staff cannot use any meetings started by children and by doing it the children are just making the (metaphorical) queue outside the nightclub longer. We know that some groups of children are using Zoom socially with their class and this is fine so long as parents monitor their child's online behaviour; it is beyond the School's control.

The government is working with broadband providers to ensure that all these connected service providers are working hard to improve the resilience of their services. Whilst things settle down over the coming days we shall try to continue to use Zoom. It would be really helpful if you could explain to your children that it might not work as expected for now and, if it doesn't, they can still get all their work on SeeSaw and maintain contact with their teacher through this medium.

We thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,
Mrs Catherine Dodds

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