



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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08 September 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Return to Learning from September

With the summer holidays behind us and all students have returned to School, I thought now would be a good time to write to you to explain our plans for your child's education.

We are very excited to welcome students back to school but also understand that a range of other feelings will be experienced throughout our community at this time. Hopefully, the contents of this letter will put your minds at ease regarding your child's return to learning.

From our recent student survey, it is clear that the thing that students are most concerned about is settling back into a routine (50% agreed with this) and being overwhelmed upon their return. However, it is also heartening to read that over 80% are excited to return. This letter should outline how we will be alleviating these concerns through our recovery curriculum.

A recovery curriculum, put simply, acknowledges that students have experienced a significant disruption in their day-to-day lives that will have affected them emotionally. It also acknowledges that this disruption may have led to gaps in their learning and will seek to address these.

Our recovery curriculum will focus on building students back into routines in the classroom through amended teaching periods in lessons. For example, in students' first week back to school, one hour lessons will be split into forty five-minute teaching periods and fifteen-minute resocialisation periods. All of this will be teacher-led but it is designed to not overwhelm students and help them to rebuild relationships with both teachers and their peers. As each week passes, the amount of time given to teaching will be increased by five minutes, whilst the resocialisation time will be decreased by five minutes until students will be back to normality in one-hour lessons.

From a teaching and learning perspective, we are aware that some of our students did extremely well in their distance learning - some even thrived in their home environments. For others, this may not have been the case and some found it incredibly hard. For this reason, we will be using a process of mapping, mastering and moving on:

Mapping is where teachers will use diagnostic tools to ascertain where there may be gaps in students' knowledge. The diagnostic tests may be in the form of low-stakes testing, questioning, written tasks that explore prior knowledge - the list goes on. From this, teachers will be able to see where gaps are and make decisions upon what needs to be explicitly taught. This is known as 'mastering' the areas in knowledge that are key to further learning. In examination groups, students will also be asked to complete some self-assessments that will also aid this process to give teachers a fuller picture so that they can best plan the way

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forward. Once students have mastered the necessary content, teachers will ‘move on’ to new content in their curriculums.

On the topic of curriculums, we have also published, from a subject level, how curriculums will be amended and the extra steps each curriculum area will be taking to ensure our students master their prior learning as efficiently as possible. These can be found in the curriculum section of our website.

We are also very keen to be pragmatic about the students’ time away from school through our choice of words. Our students find themselves in a situation that every other student has experienced across the country. Because of this, at a national level, there will be some things that are changed, redesigned or even dismissed. For example, some alterations have already been published for GCSE English Literature students sitting their exams this academic year. Our choice of words will have a big impact on our students’ mentality as they return to their studies in school. Using words such ‘lost’ or ‘missing’ have connotations that are negative and, if used repeatedly, can really have an impact on their mindset. The diagram below explains our approach to the language we will use and we would also encourage you as parents and carers to use the same approach in your homes:

A Shared Understanding


Recovery Curriculum Language

Why?


It is important that we reduce the anxiety that children may be feeling as a result of disruption to their learning.

The language that we use will be key to building their confidence with their learning and motivating them to move forward in a way that is supportive of their wellbeing.

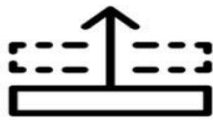
Our approach to this needs to be **consistent** with everyone using **positive developmental language**.



Map



Master



Move Forward

Overarching Approach and Mantra

We are going to:

- **Map** (where the learning is at)
- **Master the learning** (use the map to know what and where needs mastering and do this)
- **Move forward** (new content, next sequence of learning)

Language we avoid	Language we use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch up • Learning gaps • Lost learning • Repair learning • Damage to learning • Time lost • Recover (irony I know that this is a recovery curriculum!) • Make up lost time • Behind • Cover ground • Speed up • Cram in • Won't fit it all in • Impossible to fit it all in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map where we are currently at • Move forward • Master our prior learning • Consolidate / strengthen prior learning • Enhance our subject knowledge • Deepen the knowledge • Revisit to strengthen • Next sequence • Build upon • Enhance • Desirable difficulties (during retrieval) • Develop the learning • Challenge ourselves • Misconceptions (this is a valid term for when there are mistakes in learning) <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">We can be powerful as a collective pronoun – an endeavour that we are all engaging in as a community.</p>

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We feel that the measures outlined above represent a sensible and realistic approach to ensuring our students return to their learning in the best way possible. Coupled with our pastoral programme, we are confident that students will quickly get back into routines and habits in their learning and continue to make progress.

With my best wishes

Mr D Fox
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