

Dear Parents/Carers



News update (Friday 22 January 2021)

Change to INSET dates

The staff INSET conference scheduled for the 11 and 12 February 2021 will no longer take place. **Therefore, Thursday 11 February 2021 will be a normal teaching day for staff and students.** Friday 12 February 2021 will still be an INSET day and school will be closed to students.

Attendance to lessons

Please can parents ensure that students are logged into lessons on time. The beginning of each lesson is vital as key information will be given to students setting them up for the tasks they will be set. Teachers will also be taking a register in the first 5 minutes of a lesson, students arriving after this time may be marked absent.

Attendance coding during the school closure is slightly different to what you may be used to seeing as a parent. You will notice your child will be marked in accordance to the codes below for AM / PM registers.

- X - Working from home during school closure (Students will be marked as / or N in the morning, this mark will be amended to an X when registers have been collated)
- / - Present in school (this code will only be used for Key Worker and vulnerable student attending school each day)
- C - Will be used to code vulnerable students working from home
- 7 – Isolating due to being in contact with someone outside school
- 8 – Isolating due to being in contact with someone inside school
- 9 – Suspected of having covid and awaiting test result
- 0 – Student has a positive covid result

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)

In line with new advice issued by NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England, the daily close contact testing element of the testing programme which was in place as an alternative to self-isolation for those who came into contact with positive cases in schools has been paused.

Year 9 parents

Year 9 students have been invited to complete options interviews with members of the Senior Leadership Team this week. If your child was unable to attend but would like another meeting scheduled, please contact the admin team at admin@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk and an alternative meeting will be arranged for you.

The deadline for submission of the online options request form is Monday 1st February. Please remember to include two reserve choices just in case there is a clash of subjects or a subject does not run. If you would like any further support please contact your tutor, the subject leaders of the subjects you are interested in or your director of learning.

Motivation Reframed - practical advice for supporting your child's motivation during lockdown

Does your child find it challenging to generate motivation to study or to develop effective revision routines?

Research continually shows how beneficial constructive parental support is. In partnership with Dr Martijn Van Der Spoel, Ridgeway Academy is offering all parents and carers the opportunity to attend a virtual, live presentation designed to support your child's motivation in these challenging times. This will take place on Thursday 28 January at 7pm. You will receive practical tips on how to instil, encourage and embed positive study behaviour at home. The session includes extra optional materials that parents can download to help them assist in conversations with their children.

In order to attend this session please sign up at the following link before Wednesday 27 January and Zoom joining instructions will be sent to you directly.

<https://forms.gle/kKJs9rsjUf98MmLJ7>

Google Classroom help

Please be aware that teaching staff and form tutors are not in a position to answer queries about Google Classroom unless about the work set during a lesson. Student profiles including pictures will no longer be able to be edited by the student. The Ridgeway Academy logo will be replacing any existing profile images. Please use the following email address if you are experiencing difficulties

Google Classroom louise.jesson@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk

Teaching and Learning lucy.hyde@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk

ICT, passwords, log on problems ictsupport@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk

Show My Homework

Ridgeway Academy will be moving away from the Show My Homework platform and using Google Classroom for both students and parents. As you have already provided an email address and given third party permissions, there is no further action required, we will transfer your alerts from Show My Homework to Google Classroom. Please check your emails for alerts from Google Classroom moving forwards. Students will continue to use Google Classroom for live lessons, lesson resources and teacher communication and feedback. However, when full school attendance resumes, students will be set home based learning via Google Classroom and expected to submit their work either on paper or through Google Classroom uploads.

Computers and WIFI

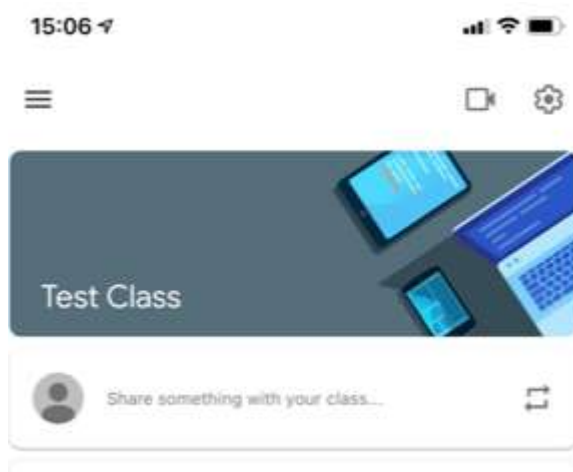
In order to support your child's remote learning we are continuing to loan students a Chromebook. If your child is having to share a computer at home or does not have one please email caroline.maddocks@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk writing Computer Loan as the Subject and we will arrange the loan of a Chromebook. A parent will need to sign the loan agreement and collect the device from school. If you do not have WIFI at home please email caroline.maddocks@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk writing WIFI as the Subject and we will organise this for you.

Accessing Google Meet

There have been a number of students saying they are unable to access Meets through the links that have been provided in the Google Classroom. If you are accessing via a **laptop or desktop computer** your link can be found at the top of the page where it says 'meet link'.



If you are accessing the Meet via a **tablet or mobile device**, this link may not be visible to you. In this case you need to use the video icon at the top of the page.



This link will only allow students to enter the classroom when the teacher has opened the link. Until that point students will receive an error message telling them "**your account lets you join meetings but not create them**" and "**you are not allowed to join the meeting**". Students will be able to access the Meet once the teacher is present.

There have also been some requests for class codes. As you can see in the first picture, these are switched off. We keep these off for added security. Students do not need class codes if they are logging in with a Ridgeway account as they are automatically invited to correct classes they are assigned to through Bromcom.

In addition to the above, check modem / routers at home are set to disable "**parental controls**". You may need to contact your internet service provider to do this, or log onto the router / modem to disable it; this mostly occurs with Virgin Media internet.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council parent/carer virtual awareness sessions Wednesday 3 February 2021

Attendees will hear from key speakers on three topics:

- Youth violence, gangs and countylines, 4-5pm
- Mental health and support for young people, 5-6pm
- Online safety and grooming, 6-7pm

The event will be split into three sessions and parents will be able to tune into all sessions, or just the ones that they have an interest in.

Our guest speakers who will be leading the sessions come from experienced backgrounds in their fields. They will offer first-hand knowledge, advice and live in experiences of these issues to help enable you as parents/guardians to 'spot the signs' in your children.

The event is FREE of charge and will be hosted on Microsoft Teams.

Once booked onto the event you will be sent a link to the event 48 hours before.

There will be a chance for attendees to win up to £50 worth of shopping vouchers should they attend the event.

To register visit <https://welhatparentawareness.eventbrite.co.uk/>

House competitions for students

Students do you fancy competing in some fun challenges to win points for your house?

The PE Department and the Heads of Houses have come up with activities/challenges which you can complete during your PE lessons and during wellbeing Wednesdays as part of the faculty offer for PE.

Each week you will be given a set of challenges which you can take part in. We will post on your PE google classrooms and, on our social media to give you instructions of what to do. Some challenges will be based on how well you perform them, how fast you can do them and how many people in your house participate (so get involved as much as you can). The staff will be involved too, so let's see if you can challenge them!

We have created a google form which you will need to fill out once you have completed the challenge. This will be sent out to you next week. Once we have all the entries and evidence from everyone, we will award house points and announce the winning pupil, staff member and winning house for the challenges that week.

A promotional video will be played in form time on Monday so you can see what this entails!

We look forward to seeing your videos.

Get competing everyone!

Keeping in touch

Please do keep lines of communication open with us (and you) to help support everyone's mental health. Often something that starts out as something small if not addressed can quickly grow into something far larger. Please do not be afraid to ask us for support. The following links may also be of help.

1. Young Minds - how to look after your mental health: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
2. Every Mind Matters provides general information about looking after your mental health which would be relevant during this challenging time as much as at any other time and provides top tips to improve emotional wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
3. MIND website provides useful information about how to cope if people feel anxious about coronavirus, how to manage staying well at home and taking care of your mental health and wellbeing among other tips and advice: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
4. Mind Hertfordshire Network provides a crisis helpline for anyone experiencing mental health distress or requiring emotional support and signposting. Professionals, family/ friends can call on someone's behalf with the individual's consent. Crisis Helpline number: 01923 256 391 or visit <https://www.hertsmindnetwork.org/>
5. There will also be helpful safe advice around managing self-care and a webpage for young people and families, focussed on how to cope during periods of self-isolation www.justtalkherts.org

Health and Wellbeing

Smiling Minds - <https://smilingmind.com.au/> - this is a website designed to bring the benefits of mindfulness to all students.

Headspace - <https://www.headspace.com/> - on this website you can sign up for your very own personal trainer to help you train your mind. There is a free 10 minute a day programme or you can also download the app on your phone.

Getting enough sleep <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxxWv6PM4EM>

Get fit to study

A librarian colleague, Philippa K. Rose, Head Librarian at Kings School Canterbury has created a short six-part series of presentations called 'Get fit to study'. Phillipa is very happy to share this resource which introduces students to tools and techniques to help them study better. They are very short presentations, the longest one is 10 minutes long, intended to help students prepare to study well, manage anxiety, improve self-awareness, set the right goals, tame time, and build confidence. It's aimed at secondary school pupils but there's something in it for everyone. Click the link to view and feel free to share:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL66JccvqhewBA5GK0iO92cpWGQZLb--it>

Best wishes
Sarah Mitcherson
Headteacher