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Richard Brand: Headteacher

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you at the end of a long and eventful week to keep you updated.

Online Lessons after 4 days

Thank you for continuing to be patient with us this week whilst we ironed out some initial teething problems. However, I am pleased to hear that lessons are now running much smoother, and issues with IT/being able to connect are far less frequent. It has been amazing to see how quickly our children have learned to navigate online lessons so independently and I have been delighted to see such high-quality Teaching and Learning taking place. Next week we will continue to develop our offer further and we will start to assess work that students submit (virtually) and continue to explore the full functions of online lessons through clever tricks like self-marking online quizzes and virtual assemblies.

Devices/4G Wifi Routers

This week we have given out 46 laptops to students who do not have a device to access online lessons. In addition, we have been able to provide 4G WiFi routers for a number of students who do not have a reliable internet connection. It has been great to see engagement to lessons increase as the week has gone on with over 92% of students successfully accessing at least one lesson by today. If you think your child could benefit by loaning a laptop or through receiving a 4G WiFi router let us know at info@thedeanacademy.org and we will action your request as soon as we are able.

Home Contact

At this time, we know that some of our young people, and parents, will be struggling due to the closure of schools. At The Dean Academy we have committed to call all 552 students within a week of school closure and will continue to do this on a regular basis. Speaking with parents and students it has been so nice to hear how much our students are enjoying their online lessons and for us to arrange support if needed.

Key Workers provision on site

If you are a keyworker ([guidance here](#)) and you have not yet registered a place for your child please do so using [this form](#). Knowing in advance which children will be with us each day helps us to plan and arrange staffing. We will supervise children of keyworkers in our computer room, where they will access the same online lessons as they would if at home. Please remind children to bring in a packed lunch (unless FSM) and their own headphones.

Free School Meals

We will send FSM vouchers to the families of any child who is eligible early next week. We will issue vouchers on which cover a two-week period, initially covering this week and next.



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If your child is eligible for FSM and you want to know more please contact Jayne Barnett, Finance Manager, on jayne.barnett@thedeanacademy.org.

Lateral Flow Testing

On Thursday of this week, we successfully began our Lateral Flow Testing programme on site. We successfully registered and tested over 100 key worker children and staff who were on site. Reassuringly, all tests were negative. When we are able to re-open school this testing programme will hopefully give parents, staff and students confidence that it is safe to do so and reinforce that the safety measures we have implemented are working to reduce risk.

Feedback

We've become aware through emails and social media that parents and students are finding online lessons far easier to access, more enjoyable/less frustrating than compared to Lockdown 1 and are feeling supported/connected through the phone calls our staff have made. I just wanted to thank parents who have taken the time to share good feedback with us – in challenging times it really makes the difference, thank you!

Well done to all of our parents after 4 days of home schooling! Next week we will be in **Week A**.

Yours sincerely

Richard Brand
Headteacher

