



Preparing for Remote Learning

21/06/21

Dear Parent/Carer

It is important that the school starts a process of preparation for a rapid change to conditions. There is always the potential for significant change of health conditions across the state (or locally) which may lead to remote learning. Last year we needed to put in place a significant change within a single week with a move to full time remote learning. This situation changed over time with a number of organisational changes supporting a gradual return.

It is impossible to determine what may be exactly needed in regards to organisation, however, we have been discussing what a return to full time remote learning would look like for our school.

If we do have to put in place fulltime remote learning we will communicate immediately with parents/carers. The following, however, would be an important part of the remote learning plan.

Be aware that this may need to vary once the specifics of any lockdown are taken into consideration at the time.

Learning

Learning will be primarily completed through our Hapara platform. Staff will be uploading general classwork and assessments on that platform during the remote learning period. Hapara is used with students everyday, therefore, they should know how to access it and how to navigate there way around each workspace.

Students have access to their google based email account through their dashboard. Their gmail (student@oberonhigh.com) is currently used on a daily basis and will play an important part in any period of remote learning.

Video based learning was used by some teachers in 2020 with Zoom being opened up by the Department of Education. Video is likely to be an option again for those staff who wish to use it. Access to Zoom will be coming to an end as the licence agreement expires. What will be available to access will be determined at the time.

Science classes also use STILE which is a separate platform to Hapara. Students can access STILE online at any time.

Communication

Communication will be spread across a number of platforms to ensure we capture all families. It is also important that we have the capacity for rapid communication to deal with unexpected situations. We will be using the following:

Millennium email – **it is absolutely essential that your details are correct in the system.** If your email has changed recently please communicate that change with us immediately.

Millennium text – this is the most rapid form of communication that we have. **It is essential that your mobile number is correct in the system.** If you have changed your mobile number recently please communicate that change with us immediately.

School email – the school email is always open and an option for direct communication. Many parents communicate through the school email regularly for a variety of reasons: oberon-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Facebook – facebook is currently used on a regular basis to communicate stories about our school. This will continue in a remote learning situation but be extended to a general communication source. It is important that all families check the facebook page on a regular basis.

School website – the school website is updated weekly. In 2020 information letters around Covid-19 were published on our website, usually with a link from the facebook page. The website can be accessed directly using the following address: <https://oberon-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

Traditional paper – this will be used to compliment all the other communication forms.

Telephone – this mode will be available as per usual.

Wellbeing

The online wellbeing hub was useful in 2020 as we moved into a long period of offsite learning. The hub will be re-activated in 2021 if the remote learning period starts to lengthen.

Year Advisors will communicate directly with students and set up processes that suit the age of their students. Senior students have a different access point than junior students and this will continue. Year Advisors may or may not use a video platform to assist with this process. The wellbeing hub will be a prime place for this contact for all groups, however, general modes of contact gmail, Hapara and phone will still be central to staying in contact.

Check In phone calls will also be utilised to assist with wellbeing and learning.

Check In Phone Calls

Last year we used check in phone calls to ensure that we kept in contact with families. This helped us determine who was managing remote learning well and who was struggling. We will be incorporating that into our communication strategy if remote learning is engaged this year.

Teachers will be allocated a number of families to communicate with on a regular basis. They will be seeking information on student wellbeing and student learning whilst also looking to assist parents/carers if needed. Feedback about the phone contact was very positive, therefore, we see it as an important process to continue.

Assessment

Assessment schedules have been distributed to students along with the assessment procedure document. In 2020 remote learning was accompanied with an alteration to the assessment schedules and task types to accommodate a different learning mode. If remote learning occurs in 2021 we would again look at assessment schedules and tasks as a whole. Changes would be communicated to students through Hapara and their gmail account.

Technology Capabilities – Paper Based Work Packages

Included is a link to a short survey in regard to your current technology situation. In 2020 we started with a significant number of families asking for paper based copies for work and as time went by this reduced to around a dozen. Paper based packages were bulky and the lag due to mail out and mail in did slow things down. We are hoping to keep paper based packages to a minimum, however, we also know that some families will need this security as they have limited/inconsistent internet. If you cannot access the survey please contact the school. The link is <https://forms.gle/CkQdTDbn9RGwV3or7>

Timetable

The timetable will be an open timetable and will not be based on the current school timetable. Students will need to organise their day to ensure that they work across all subjects. Teachers will be on duty every day as per usual whether they are working in a full remote environment or they are partly at home and school. Students will be able to contact their teachers through gmail or through Hapara. Teachers will also be available for phone calls if they are onsite at the school.

School Day

The school day will effectively still remain 9.00am to 3.18pm. It would be expected that students would complete assigned work between these hours as per normal. Communication with teachers can certainly occur during the normal school day. Teachers will be on duty between 9.00am to 3.18pm. Teachers will, however, be working beyond these hours on preparation and all the operational matters that they would normally need to attend to.

We found during remote learning in 2020 that students had to take breaks during the day, effectively creating slots for recess and lunch. The flexible nature of remote learning means that these slots can be at any time and can be taken to suit families who have several people at home working alongside each other. We also encourage these times to be device free. Resting eyes and brains is as important as staying physically active.

Technology Support

Technology support is available through our Technology Support Officer (TSO), Mr Manderson. Mr Manderson works Tuesday to Thursday each week. He can be contacted by calling the school on 63361606 or via email peter.manderson@oberonhigh.com

General Administration

The hours of operation for our school office will be the same irrespective of the remote learning circumstances. How the administration works, however, will vary depending on the workplace arrangements that need to be put in place with the health concerns at the time. Phoning the school or sending an email to the school will be the best way to communicate regarding general administrative matters.

Who will be able to be on site?

This will be determined by the Department and sent to schools as Covid-19 guidelines. Last year we were able to accommodate students of essential workers throughout the entire remote learning period. Whether this will be the case in 2021 is not known.

It is likely though that we would return to zero visitors with essential service providers exempted. Once again this will be circulated at the time.

How can families be prepared?

If you think back to last year I am sure you will remember the things that did work and did not work for your family during remote learning. This really is the first step in preparing for a period of remote learning in 2021.

The following is a list of things that will help families prepare, however, every family is different and what may or may not be critical for preparation will vary. One thing that we discovered in making phone calls to families in 2020 was that they adapted to remote learning in very different ways.

- Discuss with your child(ren) what each subject looks like and what each subject asks them to do on a regular basis
- Have your child(ren) show you how they access Hapara and then walk you through the subjects (there is variation in how people use this platform)
- Ensure your contact details are correct on the school system to ensure efficient and quick communication
- Be familiar with your child(ren)'s assessment schedule for each subject (in 2020 we changed schedules once we entered remote learning to accommodate the need for different task types)
- Discuss what the school day may look like without the usual timetable in operation – develop a general timetable for work completion to ensure routine
- Ensure that there is a place to work for each individual to allow them to concentrate and do their best
- Assess the capacity of connectivity with increased devices sharing bandwidth for longer periods during the day
- Parents/Carers need to discuss with their child(ren) when they can sit down together each day to assess what work has been completed and set some goals for the next day

There are a number of resources that the Department of Education created for remote learning in 2020. I have listed them below for those interested in having a look through. A word of caution though, these sites are in different phases of update, therefore, you will see a mixture of 2020 and 2021 material. Some of the material is generic, therefore, it will not be updated unless we do go into a new remote learning phase this year.

<https://www.hsclub.nsw.edu.au/>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/learning-at-home/advice-to-parents-and-carers>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/teaching-at-home/teaching-and-learning-resources/resource-library?q=>

Regards

Craig Luccarda
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