



Derby  
Grammar  
School

# Keeping in Touch

Spring Term 2021



*Keeping our community together*

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# Introduction

Spring Term 2021 unfortunately finds us back in national lockdown. We again face school closure and the necessary switch to online learning. However, this time we have two strengths that we did not have last March - foresight and experience.

The likelihood of returning to online learning after Christmas, having watched the COVID numbers climb, was high. We had fortunately taken the decision to prepare for this possibility and for this reason we are proud not to have missed a beat: our online learning was ready to go from day one and our doors were immediately open to key worker children.



We have got off to a strong start and pupils and parents alike are to be commended for embracing this step change and taking it in their stride.

Academically, we are committed to providing the best possible offering to our pupils. The delivery of regular, live lessons timed in accordance with pupils' daily timetables helps to structure their learning and reduce the burden on parents.

We combine the audio interactivity of Microsoft Teams with the collaborative platform of Google to ensure we can both talk to our pupils as well as monitor and assess their work in real time. We have invested a great deal in the necessary technology and our lessons are enhanced by the use of webcams and visualisers.

Pastorally, our care of our pupils is more important than ever. Morning registrations, community-strengthening assemblies and regular Tutor contact is central in our delivery.

Educational breadth is equally important. Co-curricular opportunities and guidance on sporting activities is maintained as part of our holistic education.

Staff have been hard at work, training, innovating and developing new resources compatible with this new mode of delivery. We have designed this new model to be sustainable for parents, pupils and staff.

We offer you this handbook as a way of supporting both pupils and parents in navigating the online learning environment. The core information is contained within, including key contact information for staff. Although our doors are closed to the majority, we remain fully operational and contactable as normal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Norris', is written in a cursive style.

Dr Ruth Norris  
Headteacher

# Key Contacts

Although we are not all together in the conventional way, our School is very much still 'open'.

Teachers are online and working their normal hours, we are still here to provide both academic and pastoral support, and we also have staff in School each day to ensure your calls and emails are attended to.

Should you need to get in touch with us, here are the key staff contact details to help you.

**Head:** Dr R Norris - [norris.r@derbygrammar.org](mailto:norris.r@derbygrammar.org)



**Bursar:** Mrs Cook- [bursar@derbygrammar.org](mailto:bursar@derbygrammar.org)

## School Leadership:

Mr Lakritz: Assistant Head: Academic [lakritz.p@derbygrammar.org](mailto:lakritz.p@derbygrammar.org)

Miss Stebbings: Assistant Head:  
Pastoral, Head of Sixth Form and  
Designated Safeguarding Lead - [stebbing.k@derbygrammar.org](mailto:stebbing.k@derbygrammar.org)

Mrs Scholter: Head of Primary School - [scholter.e@derbygrammar.org](mailto:scholter.e@derbygrammar.org)

Mr Hilliam: Director of Co-Curricular [hilliam.p@derbygrammar.org](mailto:hilliam.p@derbygrammar.org)

## Remote Learning Contacts:

- To report difficulties with the system: [remotelearning@derbygrammar.org](mailto:remotelearning@derbygrammar.org)
- If you need to report that your child is absent from virtual school, perhaps through ill health, please phone the school reception to report the absence using 01332 523027.

## Heads of Year for Pastoral Support:



Mrs Charnock – Head of Year 7  
[charnock.v@derbygrammar.org](mailto:charnock.v@derbygrammar.org)



Mr Benjafield – Head of Lower School (Years 8 & 9)  
[benjafield.i@derbygrammar.org](mailto:benjafield.i@derbygrammar.org)



Ms Stockton – Head of Upper School (Years 10 & 11)  
[stockton.k@derbygrammar.org](mailto:stockton.k@derbygrammar.org)

For booking into key worker provision: [keyworkers@derbygrammar.org](mailto:keyworkers@derbygrammar.org)

*Please also note that all staff can be emailed at their [derbygrammar.org](mailto:derbygrammar.org) address.  
The format follows [surname.initial@derbygrammar.org](mailto:surname.initial@derbygrammar.org)*

# The Derby Grammar Family

The Derby Grammar School family is a special one. And, it is more important than ever that we find ways to sustain this spirit and support one another.

We are fortunate that technology connects us. Pupils are encouraged to keep in touch and to look out for one another through social media. This will be a source of comfort and friendship. I have heard heart-warming stories of virtual birthday parties and WhatsApp lunch breaks. I'd encourage our pupils to include others as far as possible: create new groups, talk to others you might not normally talk to, include each other and look after each other. Remember that our pastoral staff are easily contactable by email if you want to report any concerns you might have.

Even though our community is physically apart, we will be working to extend our normal structures to you as far as possible. I'll be sending out weekly assemblies (I know how much you'd miss these!). We'll also be offering House competitions and daily registrations with your tutor groups. These networks are so important to maintain during this time.

As they say, 'united we stand, divided we fall.' We don't have to be together physically to unite. Our pupils are, after all, the most technology-savvy generation there is! So, it's time for them to show us their skills and work to keep us connected!



# Remote Learning

The Derby Grammar classroom, that place where the wonder of learning happens, will now inhabit the virtual world. We all recognise that nothing can truly replace the magic that happens between teachers and their pupils in traditional face-to-face teaching. However, with technology at our fingertips we can go a long way to ensuring continuity of education.

We have learnt from the previous phase of remote learning resulting in an enhanced suite of teaching and learning approaches. Staff have been exploring new methods of delivery and developing exciting new resources. Our aim is continually add to the current model of education which is sustainable for pupils, parents and staff.

## The importance of sticking to the timetable

- We believe strongly that pupils should aim to follow their academic timetables as closely as possible throughout the day. A regular routine will help focus and motivation. With Microsoft Teams being extensively used, pupils will be following the pattern of their normal day. To ensure pupils are prepared for their virtual school day in advance they should review the lesson details posted on Google Classroom at the beginning of each day.
- All year groups will register via Microsoft Teams with their form tutor at 8.30 every morning. Pupils will also meet with their respective Heads of Year during the week.
- Lessons begin at 9am. Senior School follows a 40 minute pattern (1h 20m for double periods). In Primary School, lessons are 1 hour long. The day also includes a 20 minute morning break and lunch break of just over an hour.

## The setting and submitting of work

- Work will be published at 8.30am each morning via Google Classroom.
- The daily morning release of work will also help to keep pupils motivated on a daily basis and enable them to pace themselves throughout the week.
- Pupils have been asked to work within subject specific Google Document files. These serve as digital exercise books, keeping work orderly and in one place. Work will be submitted in this way. A technical guide is found in the 'Troubleshooting' section below.

## How pupils will be taught

- In order to provide real-time connection and interactivity between teachers and pupils, extensive use of Microsoft Teams will be used across all year groups. Further guidance has been embedded with the sharing of teacher resources and a number of screen recordings, done through an educational programme called Loom. This allows teachers to capture their voice over visual stimulus and offer verbal instruction as well as the Microsoft Teams live dimension to lessons .
- Teaching staff have also undergone training on using new resources such as Microsoft Teams, Edpuzzle and InsertLearning which will serve to further enrich our offering.
- Teachers will also continue to provide a varied diet of work materials to engage pupil interest. This may include interactive resources such as Google Slides, Google Docs, Google Sheets as well as video clips, internet links, worksheets etc.
- We will continue the use of Google Classroom as our platform for sharing all work.
- We will continue to use Google Classroom as our platform for sharing all remote learning.

## **Interaction between pupils and teachers**

- Teachers will be available during their normal hours of work and are contactable in a variety of ways - via email or through the various modes of interaction outlined below.

*Please also note that all staff can be emailed at their [derbygrammar.org](mailto:derbygrammar.org) address. The format follows [surname.initial@derbygrammar.org](mailto:surname.initial@derbygrammar.org)*

- Primary School year groups as well as Years 7-9 have dedicated Google Classroom Classes allowing pupils to post queries, comments and request feedback. Interaction can occur within entire teaching groups as well as directly between individuals and their teachers via this platform.
- Teachers will regularly check these Google Classroom Classes during the school day and respond to any questions or needs for guidance in a timely manner.
- Year groups 7 to 13 have fully functioning Derby Grammar School email services and will be using these to contact staff for academic support. Staff will regularly check their email accounts during teaching hours and respond in a timely manner.
- Teaching staff will also be routinely using Microsoft Teams to offer lesson instruction or feedback discussions to individuals or groups of pupils.
- When working within Google Documents or Google Slides, teachers can also use the 'Comments' facility to offer individualised feedback to pupils on their work.
- If at any time pupils are experiencing difficulties in accessing the materials, they are advised to contact their teacher in the first instance or to email our service address: [remotelearning@derbygrammar.org](mailto:remotelearning@derbygrammar.org)

## **Assessment and Feedback**

- Assessment and feedback are vital parts of the learning process and we have honed a variety of ways in which to ensure this is provided as effectively as possible.
- Assessment and feedback will be offered via the various interactive methods outlined above. Teachers will make it clear to their pupils how and where to access this, relevant to each subject.
- Marking of pupil work will continue as normal, following our usual Assessment Policy that work is marked and returned within 5 working days.

## **Additional support for pupils with particular needs**

We recognise that some pupils may not easily access remote education without support from adults at home. We acknowledge the difficulties this may place on families, and we continue to work with parents in order to support those pupils. School and parent partnership will be continued through individual Teams meetings with tutors and subject teachers providing bespoke support and advice. The cycle of SENCO meetings with pupils will continue to maintain progress of existing support plans with a heightened consideration for the current mode of working. When specialist resources will support pupils and parents these will be prepared and distributed with guidance and instruction through the tasks set.

## Missing / incomplete work

- We fully understand that the home learning environment can offer challenges and the submission of work can sometimes be difficult.
- Please contact your child's teacher in the first instance if there is a reason why there might be missing or incomplete work.
- If you need to report that your child is absent from virtual school, perhaps through ill health, please phone the school reception to report the absence using 01332 523027.
- Teachers will keep track of any incomplete or missing work and record this at the end of each week.
- Parents will be contacted at the start of each week about any incomplete or missing work from the week before.

## Pupil access to the system

- All pupils have been guided through the use of the Google remote learning platform.
- A Google Classroom joining code has already been distributed within the Pupil Remote Learning Guide.
- If you need any assistance, or a copy of the above, please contact: [remotelearning@derbygrammar.org](mailto:remotelearning@derbygrammar.org)

## Troubleshooting

We have produced a number of guides that may be of use:

- How to collect work from Google Classroom on a daily basis - <https://youtu.be/FebDwzQB1JE>
- How to organise pupil work files, submit work and identify teacher feedback <https://youtu.be/9tkG5smqqm4>
- How to find pupils' subject-specific Google Document work file - [Video guide](#)
- How pupils can join Microsoft Teams meetings—[Guidance document](#)
- If you have difficulties working directly into an activity sheet - [Video guide](#)
- How to upload images or video to Google Drive - [Video guide](#)

## Availability of Chromebooks for Remote Learning

- If you do not have sufficient digital devices available at home, the school has a number of Chromebooks that can be signed out for pupil use.
- Please email [lakritz.p@derbygrammar.org](mailto:lakritz.p@derbygrammar.org) to make arrangements for collection.

# How to Support Home Learning

Moving from school life to home-school life has been a steep learning curve. I'd like to share with you some of the reflections parents have offered me on how they are best adapting.

## Routines

Parents have relayed that sticking to their child's normal routine has been fundamental. Not allowing bedtime and the morning alarm to slide too much helps pupils recognise the difference between term time and holiday time. We even suggested to some pupils that they should wear their uniforms during the day ...!

## Timetables

One of the points of feedback repeated most often is the appreciation for our efforts to produce educational content that follows the school timetable. Early on in our planning for any potential move to remote learning, we took the decision to model our online curriculum in this way. Pupils learn best with regular changes of subject and content. Encouraging your children to stick to the timetable can help avoid drift and maximise motivation.

## Limit technology

We fully recognise that children are having to spend extended hours in front of a computer; far more than normal. The specifics of 'downtime' might therefore require some revision. While pupils often earn a well-earned break on their telephones / tablets after a busy day at school, different activities might help to mix up the day a little further. One parent reported that they found that their son was more interested in reading a book in the evening than ever before.

## Exercise and movement

During normal school days those of you who track your child's movement through devices such as a Fitbit, will be constantly amazed by the ground covered. Pupils move between lessons, between areas of the school site, they run, jump and play at break and lunch and of course they are kept active in PE and Games sessions. This is difficult to replicate at home. However, you can encourage your child to physically move around in between lesson timings as well as rising to the exercise challenges set by our PE department.

## Praise actions and behaviours, not just outcomes

Parents often note the fact that their children are more likely to listen to their teachers than their parents. This is certainly true in my household! There is often a battle of wills to be played out in the home, which does not smooth the way for home-schooling. Pupils (and parents!) are finding some of this tough. Without the personal input of peers and teachers, pupils can become demotivated. Praising your child's approach, determination and patience goes a long way. Parents have been telling me they have found this to be quite a powerful tool at home.



# A Pastoral Note

We may not be able to be physically together but ensuring that our pupils are supported emotionally, as well as academically, remains our top priority.

## Pastoral Contact with School

During the period of school closure, your son/daughter will register each morning, with the exception of Thursdays when there is a virtual assembly, with their Tutor or Head of Year via a Microsoft Teams meeting. This is to offer pastoral support on a personalised and individual level and also to meet our statutory obligations. On Thursday mornings we would ask that your son/daughter leaves a “good morning” message on their tutor group google classroom by 9am.

If you or your son/daughter have any pastoral questions, the first port of call should be his/her Form Tutor who will do their best to answer those questions or point you in the direction of someone who can help.

Our school counselling services are accessible via [listen@derbygrammar.org](mailto:listen@derbygrammar.org) should you need to access more specialist support in these unsettling circumstances. Should you have any safeguarding concerns please contact Miss Stebbings directly via [safeguarding@derbygrammar.org](mailto:safeguarding@derbygrammar.org).

## COVID-19 Anxiety

The COVID-19 pandemic is proving to be a stressful time for young and older people alike. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Being able to cope with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. A person’s response to the outbreak can depend on their background, the things that make them different from other people, and the community they live in. Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way.

Some common changes to watch for include:

- Returning to behaviours they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviours in teens
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.



There are many things you can do to support your child:

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the current COVID-19 situation
- Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe
- Let them know it is ok if they feel upset
- Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media
- Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand
- Try to keep up with regular routines
- Create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities
- Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well
- Connect with friends and family members
- Keeping busy and trying something new will help us to keep mentally healthy during these uncertain times.

## Safeguarding

As a result of remote learning, our pupils will be spending extended periods of the day online. This will undoubtedly increase their exposure to the risks of the internet. Please keep an eye on internet filters and talk to your children about what they are looking at or who they are talking to.

There is a great online helpdesk community that parents can access which can give guidance about a variety of issues.

For example - <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting>.



Social media sites will become our pupils' preferred method of communication amongst themselves during the current period of lockdown and, consequently, the more vulnerable members of our community are put at an increased risk of online bullying. Please be extra vigilant regarding your son/daughter's mobile phone use.

A COVID-19 annex to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy has been emailed to all staff and parents and is also available on the Derby Grammar School website. This is a live document and will be updated, as and when needed, in accordance with advice from the government and the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Our duty of care towards our pupils continues during this period of enforced school closure. If, during this time, you are concerned about the welfare of a pupil please contact our dedicated safeguarding email address - [safeguarding@derbygrammar.org](mailto:safeguarding@derbygrammar.org) - and your concern will be dealt with.

## Useful Links

The **Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families** has an excellent website (<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>) offering self care strategies for children and young people and advice for parents and carers.

**Mrs Baker, our Psychology teacher**, recently wrote an informative blog about how to keep mentally healthy during isolation which is on the Derby Grammar School website and is well worth reading. It can be accessed by the following link.

<https://www.derbygrammar.org/2020/04/01/how-to-keep-mentally-well-during-isolation/>

**Young Minds** is offering excellent advice to young people worried about the COVID-19 outbreak. <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

**YoungMinds Crisis Messenger** provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. If you need urgent help text YM to 85258. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors. Texts are free from most networks.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help/youngminds-crisis-messenger/>

**Childline** comforts, advises and protects children 24 hours a day and offers free confidential counselling. Phone 0800 1111 (24 hours) Chat 1-2-1 with a counsellor online .

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>

**The Mix** offers information, support and listening for people under 25. Phone 0808 808 4994 (24 hours) Get support online. <https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team>

**Samaritans** provide 24 hour confidential listening and support for anyone who needs it. (Adults included.) [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) Phone 116 123 (24 hours) <https://www.samaritans.org/>

## Domestic Abuse Helplines

Derby City Domestic Abuse Service – 0800 085 3481

Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Service – 0800 019 8668

National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 200 0247

Men's Advice Line – 0808 801 0327

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428



# Co-Curricular Programme and House Events

The School's co-curricular programme adds enrichment to the education of our pupils. Here are some FAQ's while School is closed:-

## **Q. What's happening to Co-Curricular Activities while the School is closed?**

We have continued to offer a range of co-curricular activities for pupils while the School has been closed. For example, during the autumn term, pupils started filming a school play, scene by scene and at all times socially distanced. Rehearsals continue while the School is shut and the plan is to finish filming when we reopen. The production will then be broadcast for all pupils and parents to enjoy! We are also introducing new remote activities and innovative ways of getting all pupils involved while at home. During the spring term we are launching a bid to become officially recognised as an Eco School and starting a Psychology Journal Club for senior pupils. Meanwhile all pupils are taken off their remote lessons on special days, so they can enjoy a range of co-curricular activities and spend a bit of time away from their computer screen!

## **Q. What will happening to the House Competition this year?**

During the Covid pandemic we have organised a blend of remote competitions when the school has been closed and more traditional competitions when the school has been open. Remote House Competitions organised for all pupils, from Junior School through to Senior School have included House Photography on the theme 'Lockdown Life' and House Comedy. Traditional competitions held in the autumn term included House Football and House Art. More remote competitions are planned for the spring term and we plan to have a more extensive range of House Competitions in the summer term, including music, cricket and athletics.

## **Q. Are any alternative House Competitions being organised?**

A number of remote House Competitions are being organised for all pupils, from Junior School through to Senior School. The first of these is House Photography on the theme 'Lockdown Life'. Entries can be submitted any time between Monday 20 April and Monday 4 May. Full details of how to enter will be given to all pupils on Monday 20 April, uploaded alongside work set for that day. Parents will also be emailed details and can be reassured that safeguarding has been a priority in setting up the remote House Competitions.

## **Q. Are instrumental lessons and speech and drama lessons available?**

Yes, peripatetic instrumental and speech and drama lessons have continued online. These are arranged directly between pupils and parents and their peripatetic teachers. In addition to giving individual instrumental lessons, Hot House groups are rehearsing online and have a number of academies in order to teach jazz techniques and aural skills to groups of pupils.

## **Q. Can pupils continue with their Duke of Edinburgh Award programme and what is the plan regarding expeditions ?**

Yes, pupils have continued to achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards during the pandemic. In the autumn term pupils undertook Silver and Gold expeditions in the Peak District and more expeditions for all participants are planned for the Easter holiday and the summer term. The Duke of Edinburgh Award central office emails all participants and their parents directly, outlining changes and adjustments made to the Volunteering, Skills and Physical sections of the Award. Participants have an increased degree of flexibility so they can continue working towards completing the different sections of their Awards. There is a great deal of information on the DofE website, but please contact Mr Hilliam (the School's DofE Manager) if you have particular questions.

## *Sport and Exercise*

One of the frustrations of school closure is losing the opportunity to enjoy competitive sport.

But, we can still keep ourselves fit and healthy! Exercise is more important than ever as we find ourselves confined to the house. It also has immeasurable benefits for positive mental health and our ability to concentrate in our academic studies.

Get outside as often as possible. Exercising is best done in the fresh air. You can count all sorts of different activities, including getting on your trampoline!

Once Spring Term is underway the PE department will be sending out physical challenges and guidance on how to keep fit and keep developing your core games skills.

Other opportunities easily accessible from home include:

- Joe Wicks is serving as the nation's PE teacher via Youtube. His workouts are released daily at 9am and are designed for the whole family. Find them [here](#)
- HIIT workouts are perfect when time and space is limited. Joe Wicks offers free content [here](#)
- Daily Dance Shake-Ups are great fun and can be found [here](#)
- If you prefer a more tranquil form of exercise, [Yoga with Adrienne](#) is well recommended.

Our PE staff suggest keeping a log of your physical activity. You can track what you've been up to, set yourselves challenges and see improvements in your strength and fitness.



# Keeping in touch

We find ourselves physically distanced at the moment but very much united and together in spirit and heart. Our wonderful DGS community has never been stronger.

We love receiving updates and pictures of our pupils enjoying their learning and recreational activities. Please keep them coming to us by emailing: [goodnews@derbygrammar.org](mailto:goodnews@derbygrammar.org) and follow our social media channels as below.



Facebook - [www.facebook.com/DerbyGrammarSchool](https://www.facebook.com/DerbyGrammarSchool)

Twitter - [www.twitter.com/derbygrammar](https://www.twitter.com/derbygrammar)

Instagram - [www.instagram.com/derbygrammarschool](https://www.instagram.com/derbygrammarschool)