

Dear Parents and Carers

7th January 2021

Once again, I apologise for the number of communications emanating from myself over the last few days. However, I am sure that you all appreciate that the situation is a fluid one and positions will change as we progress through this pandemic.

Devices to access remote lessons

The need for children to access online learning due to COVID-19 restrictions has resulted in a situation where not all children are able to take part in live online lessons. The main reason for this inequality of access is the lack of devices such as laptops and tablets in the home.

In order to try and alleviate this situation, I have instructed our IT teams to redeploy all devices currently not being used in school and loan them to children who do not have access to a device in the home. Work is ongoing and we hope to be in a position to start loaning to families by Wednesday 13th January 2021.

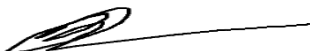
Waterton online lessons are currently being delivered through Microsoft Teams. This platform can be accessed through devices such as laptops, tablets, game consoles and smart phones. If your child does not have access to any of these devices, then please contact your school office and wherever possible we will endeavour to loan them one. For instructions on how to access Teams using different devices, please visit our website and access the Coronavirus Updates page: <https://watertonacademytrust.org/coronavirus-updates>. I must advise that the number of devices we hold is somewhat limited and therefore ask that requests are only made where none of the aforementioned devices are available to children. Priority for device loans will therefore be given to those families with no access to any device.

We acknowledge that a household may have a single device and more than one child in the home. We have therefore instructed teachers that lessons should be recorded, and as such be made available to children at another time. For instructions on how to view a recorded lesson please visit our website and access the Coronavirus Updates page. Wherever possible children should still access live timetabled lessons and have interaction with their Teacher.

In addition to the redeployment of school based devices, the trust has made an application to the DfE for laptops through the COVID Technology scheme. We anticipate that we will receive approximately 320 laptops in total. The DfE are currently dealing with a large amount of requests and therefore allocations are somewhat delayed. We will distribute laptops to those children eligible as soon as we receive them.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support, and please take care and stay safe.

Yours Sincerely



Mr D Dickinson OBE
CEO
Waterton Academy Trust