



May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Principal's update to parents – end of half-term

I hope you, your family and friends are all safe and well. We live in rapidly changing times and this letter provides an update on current issues in College, as well as outlining plans for next half-term. It also contains a lot of information for parents / carers and I have divided it into sections for ease of reading.

Communication

Communication between the College and home is crucially important, but never more so than now. I appreciate that we are sending more emails to you than previously and that there is a risk of communication overload. I want to make sure that all parents / carers and students are kept well informed and email is the best way to do this. Please can I ask that you continue to check emails regularly from the College in order to stay up to date in the fast-changing situation we are in. Please also encourage your son / daughter to check their College emails every day – this is our main mode of communication to them. They receive messages from staff, assemblies, work and our tutor programme via this route. I also email them once per week, too. Your support with this is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Reopening the College

The government announced that secondary schools should begin a partial reopening for Years 10 and 12 from 1 June as part of the gradual easing of the lockdown across society. The health and safety of all members of our College community are of paramount importance to us – this is our first priority. We are guided by the following principles:

1. the health and safety of all students and staff, planning for and mitigating risk;
2. providing high quality continuity of education for all students, whether they are working in College or remotely;
3. liaising with Local Authority transport to maintain high levels of hygiene, social distancing and cleanliness on buses;
4. care for our students' and staff wellbeing, and;
5. adhere to the guidance from Public Health England.

I know many parents / carers may feel anxious about sending their child back to College. I would like to reassure you that we are undertaking detailed risk assessments, which must be signed off by our Regional Director Ben Antell, before any reopening is agreed. Our risk assessments place the health and safety of everyone in our College at the centre. I will write to parents / carers of Year 10 and 12 children separately to provide more detail on the actions we are taking and with a confirmation of a return date.

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We started planning for a partial reopening two weeks ago. Our site must be safe and expectations need to be clearly communicated to students before they return. To do this, I will send a short video to parents and students to show the changes we have made to the building to demonstrate how we are adhering to PHE guidance, following social distancing and maintaining hygiene and cleanliness. I want you to feel secure that your child will be safe in College.

We will not have all students in Years 10 and 12 back to begin with and will start with smaller, identified groups first, which will be communicated to you nearer the time. Mrs Wallis will send all parents / carers in Years 10 and 12 a survey to ascertain your views on sending your child back to College. Please complete this, as it will help us to plan. If you have any questions in the meantime, please get in touch.

Keep up, not catch up

We have been setting online work for students since the College closed in March and will continue to do this in line with our curriculum. Key Stage 3 students will not return to College this academic year, which makes completing all tasks extremely important. Our drive here is that all students should **keep up, not catch up**. We are tracking work completion from every subject every week and we will contact parents where there may be concerns to see what support we can offer. In addition, we will also reward the vast majority of students who are doing well and keeping up with their work. United Learning have also created a 'student facing curriculum' which contains weekly lessons for English, maths, science, MFL, history and geography. Students may be signposted to these by their teachers and I enclose a how to guide with this letter. The website is: <https://curriculum.unitedlearning.org.uk/> students can login using their school username and password.

We are now starting to turn to 'live' lessons for students across the College run through Microsoft Teams. We have already started this with Year 12 and were slightly delayed in rolling this out across the College, due to the need to make sure appropriate safeguards are in place. We have updated our Acceptable Use Policy, which was sent to all parents / carers recently. I have asked staff to trial one lesson and one tutor time and then feed back to me. We will learn from this and train staff so that we can roll this out further.

Open book assessments

At the end of each academic year, students in all year groups complete end of year assessments. This year, we will run these as 'open book assessments.' This means that students will be given a task to do and that they are permitted to use their books to complete the task. This will act as a good revision tool for students and will cover work they have been taught over the year. We do want this work to be submitted. We will then use this to plan our curriculum for the new academic year.

Wellbeing

We all know that wellbeing is important. Our assemblies, tutor programmes and pastoral leaders support this. In addition, all students are being sent a weekly wellbeing update by Mr Thompson. This contains ideas and strategies to support your child through this period. You will be aware that your child has also been allocated a remote mentor to support them through this period and I encourage all students to stay in email contact with their mentor. Students can also contact any member of College staff via email if they have any concerns at all. We want to help them and to stay in touch.

I wish you and your family a restful half-term break.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Edwards
Principal



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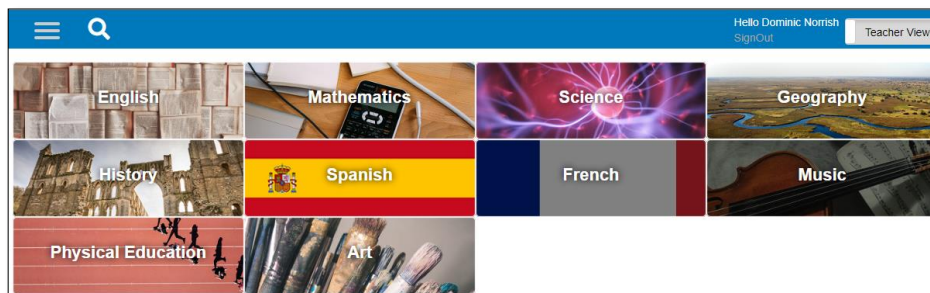
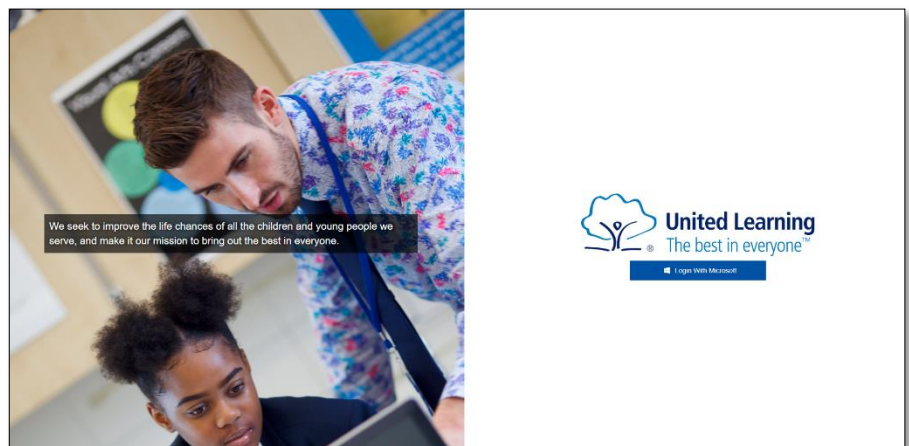
How to use the Pupil Curriculum website

You probably already know that your school is part of a national group of more than 80 schools called United Learning. The schools have come together to make online lessons for you, created by some of the best teachers in the country. Those lessons are all on this website: <https://curriculum.unitedlearning.org.uk> and your teachers will be making use of them in the work that they set you while schools are partially closed.

These instructions are to help you to log in and use the lessons on the United Learning Pupil Curriculum site.

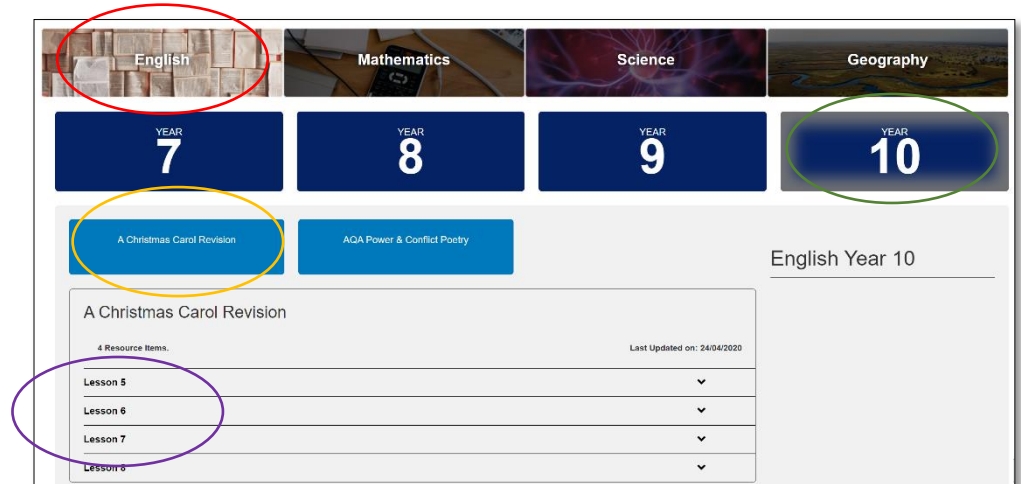
1. When you first visit the site, it will ask you to log in. Click the blue 'Login With Microsoft' button on the right and use your school email address and school password.

If you don't know your school email or need your password resetting, you will need to contact your school's IT support.



2. If you've clicked a link sent by one of your teachers, you will be taken straight to the lesson they want you to watch. If you log into the site using the address in the first paragraph above, you will see this screen, showing the subjects that have lessons for you.

3. Clicking on a **subject** expands the view to show **year groups**, then **units of work**, then individual **lessons**, as shown on the right.

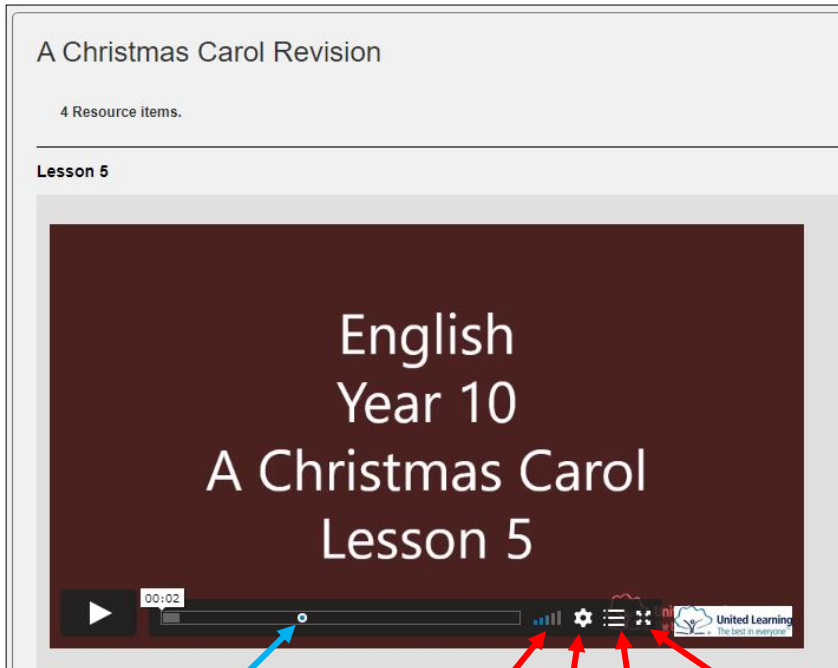




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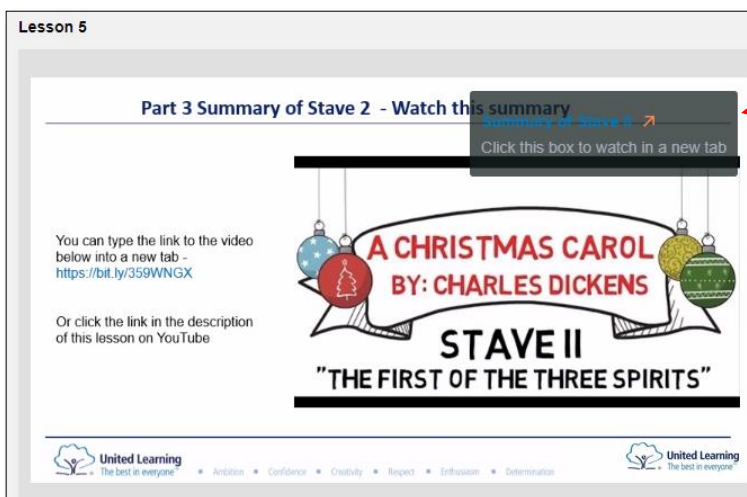
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Volume Quality Chapters Full screen

Chapters are points in the lesson that the teacher wants to make it easy for you to find and jump back to. They're marked by a **blue dot** on the timeline and a full list of them can be seen by clicking the bullet-point **Chapters** icon. If your Internet connection is slow, the **Quality** setting can reduce the amount of data needed. You will get the most out of teachers' explanations if you are able to listen with headphones.



5. Sometimes in a lesson you will see a grey **card** appear in the top right corner of the video. These cards contain links to resources that the teacher wants you to use. Clicking the link in the card will pause the lesson and open a new tab with the resource in it – this could be another video, a worksheet or a quiz. When you're finished looking at the resource, you can return to the lesson tab in your browser, un-pause the video and keep watching the lesson.

General tips:

- If watching a lesson on your phone, hold it landscape (sideways) so that the video is as large as possible;
- Watch the video in your phone's browser (Safari, Chrome) so that that cards and chapters can be seen;
- Remember – an advantage of video lessons is that you can re-watch things you haven't understood.