

CIRCULAR FOR PARENTS

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To: Parents (Class 7 to Class 10)

From: The Principal

Subject: Planned Improvements in the Remote Learning Process and Brief about the Extra-curricular (ECA) program

Dear Parents,

This is to update you regarding certain improvements in the remote learning process, which will be implemented in the coming days.

First of all, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our parent community for their extensive support and honest feedback related to remote learning. This '*new normal*' has brought many challenges for all of us – *students, parents and educators*. However, the ongoing transparent dialogues and trust between the home and school, has played a significant role in helping all of us to adapt to this new normal.

Since the last couple of weeks, we have actively interacted with our students and parents to gauge their feelings and challenges related to remote learning. We have also held many internal discussions to reflect on various processes and their effectiveness. Based on careful and collective considerations, we have decided to take certain steps to streamline the process of remote learning.

There are some parent suggestions/challenges which are difficult to address due to other constraints or may be possible to address in the near future. Rest assured, we will listen to all your feedback and try our best to streamline processes keeping in mind the overall considerations. We appreciate your proactive feedback, however, we request you to be patient with changes as it takes some time for deciding and rolling out any changes to our existing processes.

The note below explains the immediate steps that are being taken to smoothen the process further for students and parents. We will keep on reviewing and improvising our approach as we move along.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards,

Sutapa Mishra

Principal

Redbricks School

REMOTE LEARNING: COMMON CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS (Senior School)

A note on the terms used: **Sync Session** means *Live video classes* and **Async Work** means *Independent study work*.

Challenge 1: The assignments are being posted at different times without a fixed schedule.

To streamline the posting of assignments, the following schedule will be followed henceforth:

- Pre-session tasks of all subjects will be posted on **Thursday of each week** for the coming week (latest by 5 pm).
- Post-session tasks will be **posted 1 day in advance of the respective sync session (by 5 pm)**.
 - So each day, students will receive 2 or 3 tasks, depending on the number of classes the day after.
 - It will create a predictable routine for students, and help them to immediately work on the task after the completion of the respective sync session.
 - Students can work upon these tasks after the sync session, within the same day afternoon as daily H.W., or during the next day's morning hours 8 am-1:15 pm (when there are breaks between sessions).

Pre-session Tasks and Post-session Tasks Posting Schedule – A Visual Picture

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<i>One week prior</i>	-	-	-	All Pre-session tasks of coming week will be posted-latest by 5 pm	-	Post-session tasks of Monday posted-latest by 5 pm
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<i>Learning Week</i>	Post-session tasks of Tuesday posted-latest by 5 pm	Post-session tasks of Wednesday posted-latest by 5 pm	Post-session tasks of Thursday posted-latest by 5 pm	Post-session tasks of Friday posted-latest by 5 pm	-	-

Challenge 2: The submission dates are scattered and unpredictable which makes them difficult to track.

Teachers have now shared fixed **weekly homework submission schedules (covering all subjects)**, which are posted in every homeroom google classroom. The schedule follows a predictable routine, with approximately 7 days given for completion of tasks (from the date of the related sync session). This schedule brings more predictability for students, and would help them in organizing their tasks.

Note: Tasks will be accepted for upto 2-3 days beyond the submission deadline. For any predicated delays beyond this time, students should seek prior permission from the subject teacher for a late submission. Tasks submitted beyond this time, may be returned back without correction and feedback.

Please note:

- We encourage students to complete the assigned post-sessions tasks **daily or by the very next day** of the respective sync session.
- We also encourage them to **submit their work** as and when they complete it rather than waiting for the submission date.

Challenge 3: Due to multiple Google classrooms, it is difficult to track all the assignments.

However, we are working on creating a consolidated '**Weekly Planner**' for students and parents. This planner will showcase the entire week's plan for all subjects at a glance – that is, all the pre-session tasks, post-session tasks with due dates, as well as materials required for each sync session. We will be able to soon roll this out, and we hope that this will greatly help the students and parents to view and track everything in a consolidated manner.

Challenge 4: There is a lot of assignment workload, especially in extra-curricular activities.

We have a planned weekly workload chart for each grade and subject (in average mins/week) and teachers are following the same in their planning. However, we are also conducting an internal review to check whether we have been consistently able to follow this policy so far. We will also continue to monitor this going forward, so that students are not overburdened with work.

For Self-enrichment and Creative and Physical projects, we have also decided to reduce the number of assignments. Instead of assignments every week, **students will now receive 'assignments which require submission' every alternate week (once in 15 days).**

Unfortunately, during remote learning, one main method of learning is **Independent study**. Since the available screen time with students is limited, our teachers are trying their best to deliver the program through a combination of sync sessions and assignments/tasks. We understand that this puts independent learning expectations from students and expectations from parents to extend guidance to their children. We hope and wish that we will be in a situation where students can learn in the physical presence of a teacher soon.

Until then, let us use this situation as an opportunity to train our children to become more independent learners. Students are also encouraged to attend office hours if they need support from their teacher in understanding/completing their work.

Challenge 5: Students are given a lot of videos to watch as assignments, which increases their screen time and also poses device availability challenges.

Since the screen time between teacher and students is limited, sometimes videos are required for students to listen to and understand explanations. The sync session time is not enough to cover all explanations. However, we will be mindful going forward to minimize such requirements and limit them to crucial needs.

In higher grades, flipped learning is an effective model for remote learning – in flipped learning, students review content before hand and the classroom time is used more for thinking and discussions. Since interactive classroom time is limited and syllabus is vast, it becomes important in higher grades for students to also do self-directed learning during this situation.

Challenge 6: In certain subjects, the content was covered too quickly and some chapters were not covered completely.

We are doing an internal review with all teachers about this process. However, we would like to highlight that during remote learning, it is not possible to cover everything through synchronous methods (i.e. Live sync sessions), since the time is very limited.

Teachers are prioritizing content and focusing 'sync sessions' on what is critical to teach. Teachers may decide to assign certain topics more through asynchronous methods (i.e. independent study). Teachers may also decide to omit certain desirable content- the CISCE board syllabus guidelines during COVID are also being referred to for this decision. All of these decisions are taken with thorough thinking and internal discussions amongst the academic team, to ensure learning progress for students.

Challenge 7: We would like to have more Sports sessions and even Yoga sessions.

We are happy to know that students and parents both have requested for more sports and yoga sessions. We will review internally how this can be made possible. It may take some time to work out due to various timetabling challenges we would face in planning for this.

Challenge 8: The Unit-end Quiz/ Cycle test timings in the afternoon are not suitable and are preferable in the mornings.

While scheduling the Quiz/Tests, we found the office hours most suitable for logistical reasons. However, from the next Quiz/Tests, we are planning to consider other timetabling solutions to try and move them to the morning hours. We will inform parents about this well in advance of the next Quiz/Test.

Challenge 9: During cycle tests also, post-session tasks/assignments create an additional burden.

*During remote learning, one main method of learning is **Independent study (async tasks)** along with sync sessions. The teachers have tried to keep independent study tasks to a minimum during the time period of Cycle Tests. They have given only those tasks which are most critical in nature for learning to progress.*

However, it would not be feasible to have only sync sessions without any async tasks for 2 complete weeks, as Cycle tests will go on for that duration. All in all, teachers will attempt to reduce assignment workload during this time period as far as possible, but it cannot be eliminated without an adverse impact on teaching-learning.

Challenge 10: Students are not receiving timely feedback on their assignments.

During remote learning, teachers are overloaded with documentation – it is significantly higher than in regular school. Creating lesson plans, resources, maintaining various records, managing google classrooms, tracking and correcting many more tasks/assignments, etc., are on their shoulders in addition to preparing for and conducting the sync sessions. Needless to say, the requirement of additional psychological adjustment to a completely new approach to teaching and using technology.

Therefore, they may not have been able to correct student work and provide timely feedback. We do understand the value of timely feedback in student learning. Our attempt is to streamline this process further, and hopefully teachers will be able to provide regular timely feedback soon. A minimum of 6-7 days time gap should be considered before receiving teacher feedback from the date of submission by the student.

In addition to the above challenges, we would also like to share some details about the Extra-curricular program (Self-Enrichment and Creative and Physical Projects):

In these subjects, a lot of learning will be through independent study and therefore students may need some adult guidance and use technology from time to time. We would like our students to derive quality learning from these projects, keeping up with the standards of Redbricks. Therefore, we request parents to extend the required support in this matter.

If students are unable to manage all the workload, then we highly recommend that the student pursues only 1 CPP project, instead of 2 or 3 CPP projects. It is better to do one thing well, rather than try to do everything and struggle in managing the same. Students will only be expected to complete 1 CPP project satisfactorily, so there will be no attendance tracking and evaluation of the other 2 CPP projects.

We have put together a specific document which provides an overview of the extra-curricular program during remote learning. We request parents to go through this document closely, and also indicate their choice for the Creative and Physical projects through the Google Form link provided in the document on page 3.

Access the document here: [EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES DURING REMOTE LEARNING](#)

***Google Form link for the 'Project choice' can also be accessed here:
[Form link for Classes 5 - 8](#)***

Note- Class 9 and Class 10 don't need to fill up the above Google Form.

Conclusion:

We hope we have been able to address most of the common and general challenges of students and parents through this document. In addition, we have received certain subject-specific suggestions, which are being looked into by the subject-level teams. We thank you for your patience and understanding. We are looking forward to positive changes with these planned actions, and we will be happy to make further improvements with time.