



THE ORCHID SCHOOL

Baner, Pune

School-system priorities in the age of coronavirus

What TOS will do while the uncertainty lingers on.

8th of May, 2020

Dear Parents,

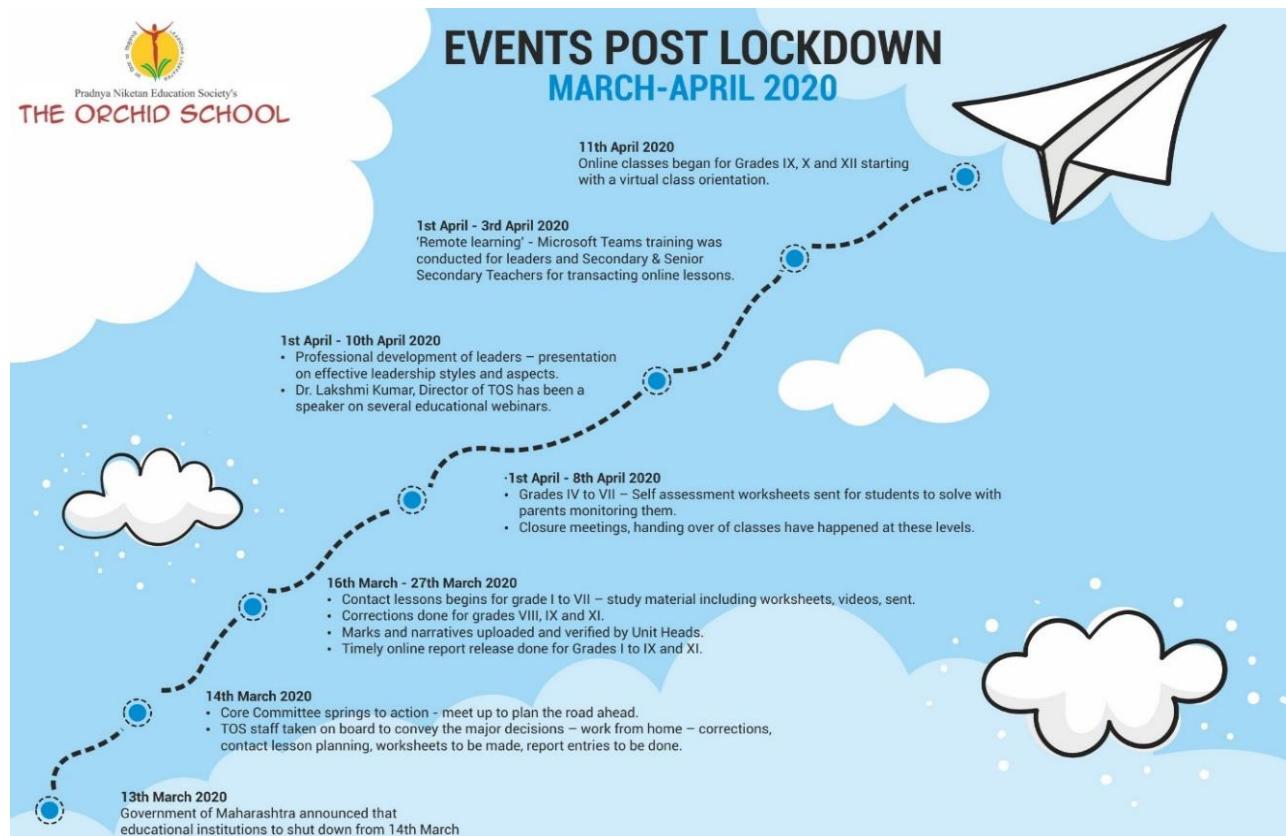
This letter comes at the times of lockdown and extended lockdowns, especially for schools. I am addressing this to all parents of Grades 1-12 students, so you get the whole picture of the planning and approach.

Now that the reality of school closure for a few months is sinking in, we as school systems must focus on major priorities.

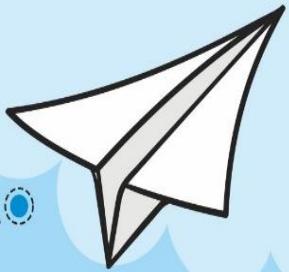
Here comes an overview of what transpired so far and what is in the offering for coming months.

Even in times of crisis, education matters. Delivering quality instruction is clearly a challenge in the current circumstances. The shift to remote learning has been abrupt. As a system we were able to quickly get into plan, train teachers, roll out remote learning, and put in place student support services in less than a week.

We have summarised it, so you get a visual overview of it.



EVENTS POST LOCKDOWN APRIL - MAY 2020



4th May 2020

Survey for online teaching conducted for parents of Grade I to VIII. The objective of the questionnaire is to align the system that best suits the students, parents and teachers collectively and make this the most effective platform during lock-down time.

4th May 2020 (ongoing)

A two weeks online training program on 'Transiting from physical to Virtual Classrooms' has been arranged for primary and middle school teachers by Socrates Foundation.

2nd May 2020

Unique session on The Science behind Styling /Power Dressing by Kusum Kanwar was arranged for the teaching staff.

25th April 2020

- Online Meditation session arranged for entire staff to combat stress.
- Free STEM activities are being conducted for Grades III to VI in collaboration with STEM academy of USA for three weeks.

28th April 2020 to 8th May 2020

- One week free live classes on spoken English organized by Helo English
- 5 service staff registered for the same.

13th April 2020 to 22nd April 2020

Service staff given online training on spoken English.

Virtual Meetings from March 2020 till date:

- Weekly core committee meetings, admin meetings, AT meetings, review meetings are happening regularly via digital platforms such as zoom/teams
- Teachers and Leaders are in constant touch with all stake holders – students, parents, fellow workers.

2nd May 2020 -

Virtual parent orientation done for Grades I and XI.

Administration – April 2020 till date

- Online admission process began for Grade XI as well as other levels where there was a vacancy.
- Online recruitment is taking place successfully wherein interviews are being conducted via Skype.
- So it is business as usual for TOS, because we believe in imparting quality education to our primary stake holders – our students and professional development of our team.

Wellness Team - April 2020 till date

The wellness team geared up to help the TOS Team and students by motivating and encouraging them in these trying times. They continue to preach the message of " Building Resilience " and always reminding us that we are not alone in this and Mental Health is equally important.

Addressing new situations in a remote-learning environment is a complex challenge. We need to adapt across many dimensions, while serving students from a variety of backgrounds. Hence, we sent a survey to assess the availability of basic tools for distance learning. Access to devices and internet connectivity is uneven even in affluent homes. Addressing that is a critical first step to ensure we reach out to you all. The survey results show that a small percentage of parents do not have suitable gadget and or internet connectivity as of now. We thus urge parents to invest in suitable dedicated digital gadgets for your child and sound internet connectivity. This is mostly because of the reality that we will have online learning as a distinct reality for months to come.

Furthermore, there is no clear picture of how long a model of predominantly remote learning will need to continue. Even after schools reopen, we may be asked to do it in

staggered timing / days for different levels, specially keeping the social distancing norms in mind. This will mean that we will keep both online and offline learning for months to come.

We have identified four priorities while lockdown is on. All these are parallel and simultaneously addressed.

- **Maintaining** health and safety of students, staff and the community by adhering to State's mandates, health official's directives.
- **Engaging** students and maximizing student learning; providing a sense of routine, discipline and continuity for learning process.
- **Providing** mental health support for students, teachers and staff on need basis and also working on preventive levels.
- **Planning** for current situation, planning for immediate future and for uncertain times, planning for when we return to school and planning for the year ahead.

With these priorities and objectives in mind, each domain has planned a contact session for the month of May. Even though it is summer vacation, we believe that lockdown for such extended period can give a sense of isolation and disconnect. So our sessions for May for grades 1-8 are **purely to serve the purpose of connection and preparing for online learning** as a new normal way of schooling for some time.

Primary Domain contact session: Twice a week from 11th of May till 29th of May.

Level	Days	Time
1	Tuesdays & Thursdays	10.30 am to 11.00 am
2	Tuesdays & Thursdays	10.30 am to 11.00 am
3	Mondays & Wednesdays	10.00 am to 11.00 am
4	Mondays & Wednesdays	10.00 am to 11.00 am

Middle Domain contact session: Twice a week from 11th of May till 29th of May.

Level	Days	Time
5	Monday & Wednesday	10.00 am to 11.30 am
6	Tuesday & Friday	10.00 am to 11.30 am
7	Monday & Wednesday	10.00 am to 12.00 Noon
8	Tuesday & Friday	10.00 am to 12.00 Noon

Secondary & Senior Secondary Domain:

Classes IX, X and XII – Classes will be conducted till **20thMay 2020**. Students will have a summer break from **21st May 2020 till 3rd of June 2020**.

Class XI – Classes will be conducted till **29th May**. Students will have a short **break from 30th May 2020 till 3rd June 2020**.

30thMay 2020 – An Orientation Session will be conducted from **10.30 am till 11.30 am** for a **Certificate Course on Media Literacy**. We urge students of grades 10,11and 12 to attend the session. This certificate course will be offered in early July, online, by eminent media professionals and academicians. This will add value to the student's resume. We will work around the 'regular' school time so students do have an advantage of adding additional skills and utilise this time more effectively. There are more such modular courses in the pipeline. Students need to cultivate the habit of extending themselves and use the opportunity created by school even during lockdown times.

Important dates:

New teachers joining: 27th May'20. (We have new recruits as replacement.)

Welcome Orientation for teaching staff: 1st June'20 (to orient them for the ethos, approach and key attributes of TOS towards teaching, learning process)

Next academic year begins through on-line platform: 4th June for Classes I to XII

As the initial coronavirus curve flattens, governments and school systems need to make hard choices on when and how to reopen schools, with what set of health and safety protocols.

We cannot wish away the situation for educators need to address both short term and long term challenges, such as setting up remote learning and supporting students. Blended learning and teaching is part of our New Normal educational process. For this we are forced to re-imagine what the 'next normal' could be like, and how education systems could re-invent themselves including few reforms that systems and school need to introduce – be it modified / reduced curriculum as CBSE may suggest, modified assessment tools, delivering co-scholastic programs in innovative ways.

Other relevant notes:

- We are awaiting details regarding remaining papers for Board exams for grades X & XII (few papers could not be conducted due to abrupt lockdown)
- Amidst this, evaluation of board papers will begin once lockdown gets lifted so our teachers will be required to fulfil the professional duties when notified by CBSE.
- We are awaiting permission from government for traders to distribute textbooks and other TLM material and how it can be delivered to you. Till then our teachers will deliver and share digital content with you. These content / worksheets will be shared.
- We may not record the sessions so urge your child to join the session. This discipline is important for lifelong learning. From June, attendance will be documented.
- New recruitments are done and they are undergoing training for online delivery of lessons. Accordingly, Teacher allocation will be done.
- Once school 'reopens' it will be difficult to coordinate timings to suit every household and siblings class timings. So, make sure you have all the necessary gadgets by then for your child/ children.
- We will indicate the timings and number of hours, depending on the age of the child and keeping in mind the already over loaded screen time for them. We will balance this with the need for learning, syllabus obligations and competency building.

We will keep in touch with you as we go along.

On behalf of my team, I want to assure you that we will do everything in our hands to keep the learning going so when we come back, we pick up from where we are.

Stay healthy and build your immunity.

Warmly yours,

Lakshmi Di