



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to update you on a number of matters. You will be aware from the news that schools are being asked to provide opportunities for Year 10 and Year 12 pupils to have some face-to-face time with their teachers from next week. We have written to parents/carers of Year 10 and 12 pupils separately to outline our plans for this and we are looking forward to welcoming both these year groups back to school over the coming weeks. We would ask that parents/carers of those year groups carefully read over the letters we have sent out and make sure that they know exactly which days and which times their daughters are due in school. If they come in at the wrong times we will have to send them home.

We know that many of you will be very disappointed that other year groups are not going to be given the opportunity to return to school this term and we share that disappointment with you. Understandably, safety of pupils and staff must take priority and we can only follow the government's guidance on this.

Remote Learning

Throughout this time of home learning, our teachers have worked hard to set high quality resources on Google Classroom that follow the structure of the school day, retaining the sense of purpose and routine for the girls in these challenging times. These daily lessons are continuing and, as far as possible, pupils should try to follow the usual school timetable 'live'. We continue to be very impressed with the resilience and engagement of the vast majority of our pupils. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the daily support you give as parents, for all the perseverance and encouragement you provide at home. It has been wonderful to continue to see so many girls work so effectively over many weeks to produce such high quality work at home. We also know that for some pupils this time has been particularly challenging and we will always work with you to offer support as far as we can.

As parents/carers you can track the progress of your child using Go4Schools. Staff are using this to award house points to pupils and also to note where they have not accessed or completed the work set. We would therefore ask that you log in to Go4Schools regularly and read email updates from Go (these can sometimes end up in your Junk mail - please check). If you are not sure how to log in to Go4Schools please get in touch with us. Staff are particularly keen to acknowledge pupils'

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hard work at this time, and these points will count towards house point totals at the end of the year.

A very small number of parents have enquired whether we plan to introduce live video lessons. We have decided as a school not to do this. First and foremost, there are significant safeguarding issues that have arisen nationally from the use of live video lessons. Secondly, we know that pupils cannot always access lessons live for several reasons, one example being because they share electronic devices at home. If lessons start becoming live it becomes an equalities issue, as only some pupils are able to access the lesson, with those unable to join being left behind. Thirdly, there is a significant question over how effective live video actually is. It is hard to see the quality and benefits of interactivity gained from up to 30 pupils crowding onto one video call.

With the above noted, it is important to state that there are many highly effective ways staff can maintain interactivity with pupils without using live video. Staff endeavour to be 'live' where they can in lessons. Teachers use the Google Classroom stream to greet pupils in class, test understanding, or ask for questions and answers. Staff also encourage interactivity by using the audio function on different software. This allows them to engage in live conversations with pupils where necessary. Occasionally staff may record themselves demonstrating practicals, or explaining difficult concepts as a voice over to slides. These methods also have an added benefit over live video streaming, in that pupils can pause and rewatch explanations, in order to gain understanding of these at their own pace. A number of our staff have been using these strategies over recent weeks, but it would be unreasonable to expect staff to do so all the time. Bishop's is unusual amongst schools nationally in asking our teachers to try to be 'live' in each lesson and to post work every lesson for pupils to complete. This has been a huge work commitment for our staff, who have had to re-plan much of their work to facilitate this.

As stated above, our staff are working very hard currently preparing for sessions with Years 10 and 12. This will place further demands on teachers, who are required to teach sessions in school to groups of pupils whilst also concurrently running a full timetable of remote learning. A consequence of this will be times when staff will be unable to be 'live' on Google Classroom for their remote lessons, because they are present in school. Students might have to wait a while longer for staff to respond to queries, or the tasks set may involve more independent reading or tasks during this period.

We are continuing to offer provision on site for children of critical workers or for those who are particularly vulnerable. We should make it clear that these girls follow exactly the same schedule as pupils working at home. We provide a space for them to work and supervision; we are not able to offer any educational support and they are restricted to a very specific area of the school.

Reports

Our school calendar does state that reports should be issued for all year groups at the end of this term. Due to the current circumstances we have decided that reports will not be issued this term. The key reason for this is that the validity of information that teachers share would be quite limited due to the lack of face-to-face time they have had with their pupils. The Department for

Education has provided guidance to schools on this and is not recommending that reports are issued for the period of school closure. Each year group has already had at least one report over this academic year and we would remind you that you can access these by logging in to Go4Schools.

Please rest assured that we are continually reviewing the work that pupils are producing and teachers are continuing their monitoring and assessment as close to our usual standards as possible. Again, by logging in to Go4Schools you can view where staff have logged any issues regarding accessing work, as well as where they have awarded positive house points.

Moving forward, we hope to schedule reporting opportunities as soon as possible in the Autumn Term. If there are any urgent questions you have for teachers please do email them directly. Wider pastoral concerns should be raised with the Form Tutor or Head of Year.

Next year

We are frequently asked 'what is going to happen next year'? The short answer to this is that we don't know. We are ready to welcome all our pupils back just as soon as we can and we very much look forward to being able to do so. In particular we want to support our new Year 7 cohort with their transition to Bishop's and we are exploring a range of ways that we can do this remotely over the next few weeks. However, we can only follow the advice and guidance provided and there is currently no indication from the government as to what arrangements might be in place from September for any year group. We will of course keep you updated. Please do follow our school website and social media to stay connected with us, and do contact relevant staff if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood and Ms T Nickson
Co-Headteachers