



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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13th January 2021

Screen-Free Afternoon - Thursday 14th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

As a consequence of the national lockdown we are all spending far too much time in front of screens. Whilst this is very necessary for work, and indeed for 'downtime', we are aware as a school of the potential impact this may have on the wellbeing of pupils and staff. As a result we have decided to make this Thursday 14th January a screen-free afternoon. Instead of staff being 'live' in lessons for the afternoon we are asking them to post activities that their classes can do away from the screen. This may be something specifically related to the subject matter being covered, or something that has a more general benefit such as reading (fiction or non-fiction), taking exercise outdoors, cooking, doing puzzles, practicing an instrument, mindfulness activities, drawing, etc. This date coincides with our Virtual Year 11 Parents'/Carers' Evening and we are conscious that for some pupils and staff this could mean a whole day of online lessons followed by up to 3 hours of online appointments in the evening. I am sure that you will agree that this would not be conducive to anyone's wellbeing.

Some staff teaching pupils in exam years (Years 10-13) will ask their groups to join them live for at least part of the lesson that afternoon as they want to cover some important content. These staff will notify their groups accordingly. Year 13 assessments will continue as previously scheduled. For all other classes, students should check their Google Classroom for the afternoon lessons as normal to find out what activity has been suggested by their teachers, then they should switch off their screens! Teachers will aim to post activities by 1.00 pm on Thursday.

It is strongly recommended that pupils do not use their screen devices at all between 1.20 - 3.00 pm on Thursday. Ideally devices will be switched off completely to give them a proper break, but at the least they should be put away and not looked at. Please feel free to show this letter to your child if they have any doubt about this guidance.

I would like to also take this opportunity to thank you as parents/carers for the support you are giving your child(ren) at home. We know that remote learning is difficult for many, but we have been immensely impressed with the way our pupils have adapted so quickly to what is being asked of them and much of that is down to you at home. Over the coming weeks staff will be

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trying out a range of strategies to maximise engagement and learning and we will communicate with you further about some of these in order that you are fully aware of what we are offering. There is no one strategy that is the 'magic bullet' for remote learning and different things suit different pupils so we are aiming to offer a mix that enables everyone to progress as best they can. It has been good to receive parent/carer feedback on what we have been doing, which so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Thank you for your comments, and do keep sending them in as they can be both a morale booster and useful for our own learning. I do not always have the chance to respond to all comments in person but rest assured that I do read and take them into consideration. If you have any feedback about our 'Screen-free Afternoon' then please share that after Thursday as this is something we may do again as the term progresses.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood
Headteacher