



# Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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## February Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

It can be hard to balance keeping you updated with school news whilst avoiding overwhelming you with information. I want to mention a few things as we come to the end of an exceptionally challenging, but in many ways incredibly successful, half term.

I have said this before but it is worth repeating that all of us at school are incredibly appreciative of the support that parents/carers have shown over recent weeks. The encouragement we get from you makes a huge difference. In this spirit I hope you won't mind this rather unsubtle reference to the following: <https://thankateacher.co.uk/>. Despite my best efforts I have not found an equivalent for parents/carers! Pupils, parents and staff are all to be congratulated on the levels of engagement with remote learning this term. We monitor this very carefully and I have been impressed with the hard work that is taking place and the quality of the work produced is often exceptional.

We have a small cohort of pupils who have been attending school over the last half term and I would also like to congratulate them on their approach and attitude. They have been working hard and supporting one another in the ways that I have come to expect of Bishop's pupils. I must also thank our staff for ensuring that we are able to provide supervision to these pupils, many of whom have given up their time to facilitate this whilst also managing their online workload.

All our pupils are still collecting House Points as a reward for their work and attitude and the following deserve a special congratulation for winning the most House Points in their year over this half term:

Year 7	Mia Jager - 7Parr
Year 8	Aimee Alton - 8Seacole
Year 9	Georgina Gregor - 9Hadid
Year 10	Katie Earl - 10Austin
Year 11	Immy Kerr - 11Parr

***"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016***



Year 12	Naa Yarley Yartey - 12Parr
Year 13	Holly Thomson - 13Hadid

The overall House Competition continues apace and the latest 'league table' is as follows, at the halfway mark for the year:

Austen	15319 House Points
Franklin	14847 House Points
Hadid	16773 House Points
Parr	16664 House Points
Seacole	16753 House Points

Last week we conducted our first ever 'virtual' School Council meeting and we have also held focus group meetings with some of our Year 12s. We were keen to get feedback from our pupils about their experiences of remote learning and Mrs Jackson, who has overall responsibility for the School Council, was very impressed with the approach of the School Council reps. There were a number of useful suggestions and ideas that we have taken on board and one aspect that all pupils were very positive about was our use of screen-free time and this week's Catch Up Day. As a result of this feedback we are scheduling the following for the next half term:

- Wed 24 Feb - Screen-free afternoon
- Thurs 4 March - Catch Up Day
- Mon 8th March - Screen-free afternoon
- Tue 16th March - Screen-free afternoon

These will all work on the same basis as those held so far this term and we may add an additional opportunity during the week beginning 22nd March (the last week of term) depending on what is announced regarding schools re-opening.

On the subject of re-opening of school to all pupils, I have no information on this for you. We are expecting an announcement on 22nd February and have been told that schools will get at least two week's notice before pupils are expected to attend. We very much want our pupils back in school, but have to await guidance from the Department for Education. In the meantime we will continue to devote our attention to ensuring that our pupils get the best possible experience whilst working remotely. There is a lot of unhelpful media attention around the impact of school closures, much of which uses language that is likely to only add to pupil and parent anxiety. I do not underestimate the challenges young people are facing through this pandemic but at the same time, more than 25 years in teaching has given me great faith in their resilience and ability to keep learning and progressing, often in the face of immense personal challenges. As a school we always prioritise supporting our pupils with both their academic and personal development and I know that we will continue to do this, working in partnerships within and beyond the school community.

Another area of uncertainty relates to how grades will be awarded to current Year 11 and Year 13 pupils this summer. Again, we must wait for guidance, which we likewise expect to be published on 22nd February. Rest assured that, once the guidance is out, we will work with all those pupils to help them to achieve their potential this summer.

I am pleased to announce that we have recently joined the Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield Schools Partnership which runs a range of activities supporting families in the area. You will have already received a copy of their most recent newsletter publicising upcoming events and activities all of which are now available to pupils, parents and carers from Bishop's.

Attached with this letter is some publicity for local businesses who generously supported the school by donating prizes for our Christmas raffle. We raised over £800 so a huge thank you to all those who bought tickets and who provided prizes.

I hope that you and your families have an enjoyable half term. Although there are limits to what we are all able to do at the moment, it is vital that we take a break and use the time to refresh ourselves ready for the next half term.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Wood  
Headteacher