



Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that, as usual, this week's update finds you and your loved ones safe and well. The weather is certainly cheerier, giving us all the opportunity to spend more time outdoors. Please see the next two pages for the new news; I have then included previous notices again for your attention, including the links which many of you are finding so useful. May I wish you a restful few days over Bank Holiday. My next update will be with you on Friday 5th June unless anything urgent crops up beforehand.

With very best wishes to you all

Lesley Beck

School 're-opening'

Following the lengthy update I sent you last week, I can confirm that we have received no further detail from the Department for Education over what they mean by 'face to face' opportunities for Year 10 and 12 students prior to the summer holidays. This being the case, I have spent the week drawing up a detailed Risk Assessment for the school; this seeks to put down on paper what we would all need to do, and the changes we would have to make, in order to try to keep students and staff safe. This is currently being looked at by our Governors and staff, and once they have given me their views, I will share this with you.

I am very grateful for the many, many emails you have sent to me and my staff over recent weeks, keeping us up to date with how you all are, and how you are coping as honorary teachers. You are all doing a grand job in very trying circumstances and should be very proud of yourselves. We here at Balfour salute you all. As I mentioned last week, I have put together a very brief survey to get a snapshot of how you are viewing the partial and eventually full return to school. Please would you follow this link so I can get a fuller picture:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2K76TTP>

I will close this survey on **Thursday 4th June**, in order to be able to analyse the responses in time for the next update.

Finally, with regard to re-opening, I wish to repeat what I said to you last week: please be assured that when it comes to trying to ensure the safety of my students and staff, I will not hesitate to make

decisions that I feel are in the best interests of our school community, even if they run contrary to the guidance set out by the Government. Each school is unique, and I feel that, having given due respect to any guidance we then **determine what is right for us and our school community**.

Half Term

Half term is upon us, and I know that many of you will be looking forward to a break from the routine we have been working to. As at Easter, teachers will not be setting work on a daily basis. Instead, students may, if they wish, work on the Scholars activities which they can find on Office 365 via the website. The deadline for completion of Scholars tasks will be the 5th June. Should they also wish to, they can catch up on Scholars tasks they started at Easter, or any pieces of work that they haven't quite finished. Our teachers and Teaching Assistants will be available for a 'Keeping in touch' hour over half term, Tuesday to Friday, should you or your child wish to get in touch.

Covid-19 Testing

You may already be aware of this, but just in case you are not, please see the following notice from the Government:

Testing now available to anyone with symptoms of coronavirus

The government has announced that anyone with symptoms of coronavirus is now eligible to book a test, ahead of the rollout of the test and trace service. Anyone experiencing a new, continuous cough; high temperature; or a loss of, or change, in their normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia) can book a test.

A coronavirus test can be booked here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19>

Government guidance for parents

The Government has also put together this guidance document on how parents of secondary age children can assist with their child's remote learning:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

For those of you with primary aged children, you may also be interested in looking at the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Year 10 Work Experience

For parents of Year 10 students, in light of the continuing pandemic and the uncertainty it brings, we are in the process of cancelling all the Work Experience placements you and we had spent so much time arranging. We will be asking our students to contact their planned placement and also let them know personally.

Reminders from previous weeks:

1. Please remember, if you are not sure of how to get in contact with us, please email: office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk and staff overseeing this area will ensure your message gets to the right person.
2. Healthy minds and bodies.
 - Below are a range of resources, websites and apps that you can access and that provide links to further mental health and well-being materials.
 - <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources>
 - <https://www.headspace.com>
 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>
 - <https://lifeontime.co.uk/how-much-sleep-teenagers-need-in-lockdown>
 - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips>
 - <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/supporting-your-child-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>
3. Safeguarding
Keeping our students and their families safe is our most important job. Please contact us, in the first instance via office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk or directly to any of the email addresses of staff with whom you are in contact.
4. There is a lot of support available to help keep your child safe online. Below are some useful links to help parents and carers:
 - Think You Know: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
 - Internet Matters: <https://www.internetmatters.org> (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
 - Parent Info: <https://parentinfo.org> (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
 - LGfL: <https://www.lgfl.net/online-safety> (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
 - Net Aware: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk> (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)
5. Could I repeat, please, the message I have received from local Health practitioners, urging you to get in contact with your doctors, or the hospital, if you are concerned in any way about your own, or your children's health. They are extremely concerned that illnesses are being ignored, or going untreated, which could lead to serious complications. Please do seek medical help for yourself and your families if you need it.

6. I was sent the enclosed link by a headteacher friend who works in Cumbria. It is a collection of really good advice and guidance to parents and other adults on how to cope and make sense of the current situation, from an adult perspective. I hope you will find it of some use.
<https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ELM006-COVID-19-public-info-a5-booklet-AW-online-1.pdf>

7. A reminder about **Stafford's House of Bread** should you have need of it:

Who is it for? The House of Bread Food Bank is to supplement those who have food but for some reason need that extra support.

How does it work? The House of Bread Food Bank is not only a referral food bank, it is accessible to anyone in need.

If you wish to contact the House of Bread, please email: info@hobstafford.co.uk

Or Tel: 01785 243492. Alternatively, please email Mrs Hedges, our Student Support Manager: rhedges1@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk and she will be happy to arrange a delivery for you.

8. The online activity pack from CEOP has a wealth of age appropriate activities to address keeping young people at both primary and secondary school age safe whilst accessing the internet and social media platforms.

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/?utm_source=Thinkuknow&utm_campaign=03f521e658-TUK_ONLINE_SAFETY_AT_HOME_21_04_20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-03f521e658-55023069