



Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

Our Ref: LDB / VM

12th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Another week has quickly passed, and I hope it has passed well for you all. These are rapidly changing times, with lockdown easing in all kinds of ways and many of us having to make sizeable adjustments as a result. Here in school we have been getting ready to welcome back our Year 12s next week, and our Year 10s the following week. I have sent out detailed information to parents and students of those year groups and therefore will not repeat myself here. Suffice to say we are now as Covid-ready as we think we can be: social distancing markings and notices are everywhere, we have hand sanitisation stations at several points in the school, classrooms have been laid out appropriately etc etc etc. If you haven't yet had a chance to read it, please do have a look at our Action Plan, which I sent out to parents of Year 10 and Year 12, and which is available at the following link:

<https://www.sirgrahambalfour.co.uk/news/?pid=21&nid=3&storyid=51>

Please also see the revised Behaviour Policy, which includes a brief addition to how we would approach breaches to the Action Plan, by following this link: <https://www.sirgrahambalfour.co.uk/news/?pid=21&nid=3&storyid=51>

With regard to what will happen in September, there is a great deal of uncertainty. This week the Prime Minister told us all of his desire for all children to be back in school in September. No-one wishes that to be the case more than me. However, if social distancing, even at 1 metre, is required in September, then there is simply no possibility of having all our students back at the same time. I have said to you on several occasions that we are planning for a continuation of blended learning into September, ie that students of **all** years may continue to spend some time at home learning, and some time in school. I assure you again that I keep a very close eye on developments and changes in Government guidance and will keep you informed of anything new.

In the meantime, I wanted to let you know that our teachers have been busily working on ways in which they can add more interactivity into their lessons. They are planning on adding video links of demonstrations, sound recordings of explanations and instructions, and even 'live' lessons, to supplement all the other work which has been set.

It is really important that those children who do not have ready access to a laptop or computer are not disadvantaged by this, which is why we will be building up banks of video resources, which can be accessed at later points. We will also make sure that paper copies of any work set will continue to be posted out to families without ICT resources. Across our school that is approximately 100 families. We have been allocated a tiny number of laptops by the Government, destined for a very small number of families of Year 10 students; this was first promised before Easter and to date, we have not received our allocation. As soon as we do, we will get these out to those families. The Local Authority has provided a small number of laptops to our children who are in care; I am pleased to say we have received them this week and they are being distributed as I write.

To finish today, I wanted to thank all of you who continue to email us, expressing your thanks and appreciation for what we are doing. I always pass your thanks on to our staff, and I know that they enjoy seeing it. I remain deeply proud of the ways in which our whole community has pulled together over the past three months. I am really looking forward to seeing our Year 12s and Year 10's over the next two weeks, and cannot wait for the day when we are **all** back together again.

Stay in touch, stay safe and well

All best wishes to you and your loved ones



Lesley Beck
Headteacher

Reminders from previous weeks:

1. Covid-19 Testing

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>

2. 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.
3. 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>

4. 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.

5. 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)

6. 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.

7. 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>

8. 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.