



Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

5th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well. Despite the cold, the nights are definitely shortening and the added light during the day brings a welcome hint of spring. Brighter days are coming.

As is always the case, previous versions of this newsletter are available on the school's website (www.sirgrahambalfour.co.uk), just in case you need to refer to aspects covered before.

School Re-opening

No further news on this yet, although the Prime Minister confirmed that 8th March remains the earliest date at which some children will return to school. As soon as we know any more, I will be in touch with you and your children. We cannot wait to get them all back in school.

Parents of Year 11 and 13 students

The consultation regarding how this year's exam results are to be awarded is now closed. We await with interest the outcomes of that consultation and will relay them to you as soon as we know. What is clear is that students must continue to do the work we are setting – the Government's stated aim is for schools to assess students based on the work they have done, rather than an estimate of how students would have done, had the pandemic not taken place. Many thanks for your support in helping to keep your offspring focused on their work.

Laptops and devices

We have again this week been informed that we will receive a very small number of devices shortly. As soon as they are in school, we will be sure to get these out. To repeat my plea of last week, if you, or anyone you know, has a laptop or tablet which is not used and would like to donate it to the school, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact us at office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk if you can help.

Snapchat and inappropriate images

There have been concerns raised by the local police that inappropriate images are being circulated on Snapchat and other online platforms. Whilst we know that the vast majority of parents/carers know about setting parental controls, it remains important that we keep children safe by ensuring these controls are in place. The NSPCC has a range of good advice for parents on their website concerning online safety, see link below.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

The NSPCC, in conjunction with O2, have also set up an advice line for parents to get assistance with setting parental controls. Please call 0808 800 5002, if you need any assistance.

Please feel free to contact our Safeguarding Leads, Mrs Metcalfe and Mrs Hedges, if you have any concerns.

'Catch-up' Week – 8th-11th February

As I mentioned last week, this next week will be a 'catch-up' week for students. During this week, teachers will not be setting new work or teaching new lessons; instead they will let your children know what they are supposed to be doing, whether it is catch-up work, revision or assessments. For those children who are fully up

to date, they will be able to access the Scholars' tasks to enrich and broaden their knowledge still further. Miss McConnachie has emailed all students in Years 7-11, explaining the Scholars' tasks for next week and this message is repeated in the Student Bulletin as well. Teachers and Teaching Assistants will be on hand for help and advice throughout that week as normal.

INSET Day Friday 12th February – school closed to all

As per our school calendar, Friday 12th February is an INSET day for school staff and therefore, it gives students an extra day off before the half term. This does include the children of Key Workers who are currently in school. Staff will not be setting work for this day, but if required, Scholars' tasks and revision are always available, should you wish it.

Half Term week 15th-19th February

As in normal times, this will be a holiday week and school will be closed to all staff and children, including those of Key Workers. We will re-open for those children only, from 22nd February.

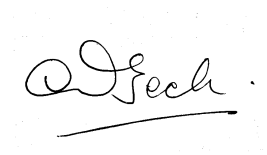
Reporting positive Covid tests over half term – for parents of children currently attending school only

Please do contact school using office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk if your child has symptoms and subsequently tests positive for Covid during half-term week. We will then be able to instruct the other children in their present bubble to fully self-isolate according to the current rules. For those of you who have given consent, we will carry out Lateral Flow Tests with your children twice next week, and will let you know, as now, if your child tests positive.

And finally

Another week past and another week closer to spring and hopefully, things returning to normal. I am extremely heartened by the progress the NHS is making with vaccinations across the country and the hope this brings to us all. Many thanks to you for everything you are doing. I know that home schooling is not what you signed up for, but believe me, you are doing a grand job of it, and we will be here to fill in the gaps when we can fully re-open again.

My very best wishes to you all



Lesley Beck

Proud Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School