



Dear Parents and Carers

## Weekly Update letter - Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

I sincerely hope that you and your families and loved ones are all well and managing to stay safe and healthy. At the end of the second week of school closure, I am still finding it very odd not to be surrounded by staff and young people, and by the noise and energy that accompanies them all. I have, though, been absolutely delighted to see huge amounts of excellent work being submitted by your children to our teachers. I have never given out so many Headteacher's Awards in such a short space of time!

The following, in no particular order, is a collection of advice, guidance and information for you to read, and which I hope will be of use to you:

### 1. Work for students to do over Easter

As I mentioned to you last week, we have been working on ways to continue to support children and families over the Easter break. I am aware that some of you will want to take a break from the routines we have now established, and possibly spend time as families doing something different. For those of you who are continuing to work, either from home or on site, you may be grateful of work being set which will keep your children occupied. So, for the fortnight of the Easter break, we have come up with the following. It provides a two-week break from the curriculum, but allows for children to carry on learning, whilst doing it in a slightly different way, and this time, with rewards!

The Easter break is also a time when I would like our staff to have a break, to draw breath, and catch up with their own families. However, the stars that they are, our teachers have offered to maintain contact via a 'Keeping in Touch' hour, once a day throughout the next two weeks. They will reply to emails and may in turn email you and/your child to check all is well. Be assured that, once the Easter holiday is over, we will all re-commence our new working patterns.

#### The Easter Scholars Awards

These Easter break activities are a 'booster' to normal work and will only be available for students to complete during the Easter break.

After the Easter break, students will go back to their normal work, and to the Balfour Scholars' tasks already on Office 365.

#### **Where can the tasks be found?**

In the Balfour Scholars Award section of Office 365. We already have folders for each year group saved here and we have added a folder called Easter Scholars Work where the tasks which teachers have put together are found.

#### **Logistics of Easter break activities**

Students will carry out tasks of their choosing and send proof of completed tasks from the Easter Scholars work to their subject teachers. The subject teachers will then keep a tally/emails of this work, which will then be collated at the end of the Easter holiday. Students will not be able to submit tasks that were created for the Easter break work after Monday 20th April. If the task includes something like

watching a documentary, then students may have to complete a quick write up about what they learnt – this will be made clear by the teacher’s instructions.

The following shows the number of tasks which will need to be completed to gain each level of award and badge:

Type of Easter Scholars’ Award	Tasks needed to complete	<b>Potential rewards (still to be decided and arranged)</b>	Badges
Bronze	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donut/cake celebration</li> <li>• Watch a film in the hall with pizza</li> </ul>	All students who complete the award will receive a badge to wear. Personalised to fit the level achievement via colour and inscription.
Silver	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cinema</li> <li>• Bowling</li> </ul>	
Gold	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go Ape/skegways at Cannock Chase</li> <li>• Horse riding</li> <li>• Theatre visit</li> </ul>	
Platinum	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City day trip</li> <li>• Drayton Manor</li> <li>• Harry Potter World</li> </ul>	

We really hope that your child will want to take part in the Easter Scholars Award Challenge and look forward to seeing examples of their great work.

2. **Key Workers: you will be aware from my letter last week, the school building will be completely shut for the period 6th-17th April for pre-planned deep cleaning and maintenance.** Please do take steps to arrange alternative cover for your child. I will be pleased to put you in contact with the Local Authority if you need an alternative setting for your child during this time.
3. Please remember, if you are not sure of how to get in **contact** with us, please email: [office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk) and staff overseeing this area will ensure your message gets to the right person.
4. We have been in touch with **Stafford’s House of Bread** this week, and thought it might be useful to share their details, which you might wish to share with others:

**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](mailto:info@hobstafford.co.uk)

Or Tel: 01785 243492

Alternatively, please email Mrs Hedges, our Student Support Manager:

[rhedges1@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:rhedges1@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk) and she will be happy to arrange a delivery for you.

5. For those of you with younger children, the following links may be useful to help clarify the situation and their **understanding of coronavirus**.

- <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/>
- [https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=this downloadable comic&utm\\_campaign=Weekly-03-03-20&t=1583271654945](https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=this%20downloadable%20comic&utm_campaign=Weekly-03-03-20&t=1583271654945)
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51342366>
- <https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>
- <https://littlepuddins.ie/coronavirus-social-story/>
- <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

6. The following link will take you to advice put out by the Government, aimed at parents, and which offers advice and guidance on **how to support young people's mental health and wellbeing**:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

#### **7. Guidance for parents and carers: keeping children safe online**

The Government has updated its information for parents and carers to include a section on keeping children safe online. It provides links to online resources that will help support parents and carers in keeping their children safe online. Full details can be found in section 6.3 of the guidance for parents and carers on the closure of educational settings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

#### **8. Consultation on new build**

Although it may seem of lesser importance at this moment in time, we hope that you have had a chance to have a look at the consultation paperwork we sent out, covering the proposed new block which would be built near to the Sports Hall, and which would allow us to take in an additional 30 students in the years 2021 and 2022. The consultation document is available to view on the school website which is [www.sirgrahambalfour.co.uk](http://www.sirgrahambalfour.co.uk) Please send the school your views by 4pm on Friday 24th April 2020, by sending an email to [consult@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:consult@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk)

#### **9. Consultation letter on lunchtime shortening**

You will see that I have enclosed in this mailing a letter seeking your views on a slight reduction to our lunchtime. I mentioned this to you in the last Balfour Newsletter, but it may understandably have slipped from your radar. I welcome your views and will respond to any questions you may have.

#### **10. GCSE and A Level exams**

As I write, we have still not received final guidance from the Government and Exam Boards over how our Year 11 and 13 GCSE and A Level grades will be awarded. Please be reassured that we will be doing everything in our power to make sure none of our students is in any way disadvantaged. As soon as we know for sure how grades will be awarded, I will write to you again.

## 11. Entry to sixth form

Following on from the previous note, please again be reassured that we are really looking forward to welcoming back all the students who have demonstrated the aptitude and desire to come back into our Sixth Form in September. We are currently designing units of work which will help them make the transition to the demands of A Level work, and will be in touch after Easter with more details.

## 12. Goodbye...

We would like to express our thanks and best wishes to Mrs Stocks, who leaves us at Easter. Mrs Stocks has been standing in for Mrs March, who returns to us following her maternity leave. Mrs Stocks has been a wonderful addition to our team and we will all miss her. We wish her all the very best for the future, and who knows, maybe we will see her again.

Following the same pattern we are establishing, I have today emailed every student to keep them up to date and to congratulate them on their hard work. I have also, yet again, reiterated to them, very strongly, the importance of staying at home, self-distancing, and not mixing with groups. I know that you will be continuing to support this as well.

I would again like to offer our thanks and appreciation for the many emails you have sent in over the past two weeks for the work our staff are doing. I have made certain that all staff have been made aware of your comments. We do seem to have settled into a really good routine now, and I know from many of you that this is helping the family as a whole. I absolutely believe that sticking to a routine which is as normal as possible in these wholly abnormal times will help us all. Many thanks to you for helping to maintain this at home.

If, however, you have any concerns over how your child is coping with their work, please do not hesitate to email their House Tutor or their subject teacher, who will be happy to advise.

I would like to wish you all a peaceful and safe Easter break, and offer my best wishes to you, your families and friends.



**Mrs Lesley Beck**  
**Very proud Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School**