

Kettlethorpe High School

Standbridge Lane, Sandal, Wakefield WF2 7EL

Headteacher: Mr T Griffiths



29 January 2021

Dear Pupil, Parent/Carer

In a week when the Prime Minister announced the possibility that schools could start to re-open to all pupils on Monday 08 March, I have made time to phone over 40 families.

The phonecalls supported the school's approach to keeping in touch with our pupils, as well as recognise the hard work that pupils are putting in whilst working from home. It also allowed families to tell us what they thought the school was doing well, during these difficult times, as well as provide feedback on what we could do to be even better.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking to families and it was very clear that we have highly capable and adaptable pupils who are responding to a strong remote learning offer. Overwhelmingly, families were of the opinion that the live/remote learning offer during this lockdown is much better than our first attempts during lockdown 1. It really was encouraging and rewarding to hear the positive feedback for the hard work and efforts of staff in school. Indeed, one parent described it as 'utterly brilliant'.

In order to support pupils with their remote learning from home, do please encourage pupils to arrive early for their lessons to support a prompt start and end to lessons. This will also assist in maintaining breaks between lessons which, will also mean pupils get time out from working with electronic/computer equipment. The school is aware of the concerns raised through pupils being online for long periods during the school day and we are looking at ways to reduce this. More details will follow going forward.

With pupils arriving on time for their lessons, we will also reduce the burden on teachers, who have to break from their lesson delivery to let in late pupils who are waiting in the 'lobby' areas.

Year 9 will be getting access to GCSE Pod which really has been popular with our Year 10 and Year 11 pupils. Mr Lickiss is writing to Year 9 families with details.

In addition to school home learning, a wealth of resources can be accessed via the BBC.

Schedules are published weekly and can be found at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zvryp4j>. Schedules can be downloaded and specific lessons exist for secondary age school children. These can be viewed at any time on BBC

iPlayer. A reminder that any resources accessed through BBC Bitesize are free to families using BT and EE. The site is exempt from data charges.

By now our Year 10 families will have had the chance to book teacher appointments for our virtual Year 10 consultation evening on Thursday 04 February. So far, feedback on setting up appointments has been positive. Do please contact school if you find this difficult to do. We really are looking forward to talking to families about the learning and progress of our 336 Year 10 pupils.

We have now sent out electronic email reports to our Year 11 families and next week we will do the same for our Year 10 pupils. This is also another first for the school and, so far, feedback has been positive. Do please contact school, either Mr Douglas or Mr Lickiss if, for whatever reason you are unable to access reports electronically.

Year 11: The Ofqual consultation, on the approaches to this year's GCSE examinations, ends later today. It is expected, but not yet certain, that this may involve some type of 'test'. This, of course, will very much depend on how the nation is handling the Covid-19 context.

At this point, our advice to all our Year 11 pupils, is to engage fully at all times, with the Year 11 remote learning offer. In addition, be sure to have plans for next September in terms of progression onto college and/or employment. Having a plan and target to focus on will be helpful to you.

Please rest assured that the mock examination results will not be used alone to determine any potential grades for our Year 11 pupils. Teachers in school will be using the mock papers to support teaching and learning and to identify any gaps in learning.

In school, we have very experienced subject Team Leaders who will make grade assessments on individual Year 11 pupils from a range of sources. For example, tests, homework, folder work, remote learning etc. The school fully intends to see every pupil leave with the grades that truly reflect their ability. We are confident we can do this. Keep the focus Year 11 and do continue to engage with your learning.

Families may be interested in attending a virtual Higher Education Roadshow 2021 on Saturday 30 January at 11am. This event normally takes place in The Ridings shopping centre. This event will detail live talks, virtual tours and question and answer sessions for pupils interested in what to do at age 18+. The host page is: <https://www.wakefield.ac.uk/roadshow>

Calendar Changes/Updates: Please note that the previously published staff training day for Monday 22 February 2021, will no longer be taking place. It will revert to a day where school will be open to the children of critical workers/vulnerable pupils and remote learning will be in place for all pupils who are at home.

The school will now move the training day to later in the year, most probably after Easter, in order to allow teachers to assess and grade our Year 11 pupils. This is to ensure that our Year 11 are given the best opportunities to get the grades they deserve, taking into account the guidance on assessing GCSEs this year, as and when it is published by the DfE. Staff in school will be able to moderate, standardise and rank order the Year 11 candidates working in subject teams.

The school will look to advise families of a confirmed date at the earliest opportunity. Thank you for your support on this change.

Covid-19 Update: Since the introduction of Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs), we have conducted 967 LFTs in school. This week, alone, we have done 370 LFTs, with 240 staff tests and 130 pupil tests.

The LFTs this week identified 4 positives, three staff and one pupil. In addition, the PCR tests taken at local test centres identified four other positives. Again, three staff and one pupil.

Whilst school continues to be open for the pupils whose parents/carers are critical workers and vulnerable pupils, we are operating with reduced staffing. On one day this week we had 34 colleagues away from school which represents 20% of the school's workforce. These colleagues were out of school as a result of having tested positive for Covid-19, self-isolating, working from home to support family and childcare arrangements. This clearly has an impact on the day-to-day work for the school, especially as we have staff now involved in administering the LFTs each week.

Do please continue to book your child in using the weekly online booking form and please continue to advise pupils to stay safe, wear masks and wash their hands frequently.

Wellbeing: We understand the pressures that everyone is facing right now and the challenges that home schooling, working from home and supporting young people through the pandemic can bring. The NSPCC have put together some useful tips and ways to access support, specifically aimed at parents and carers. Please visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/> for more information.

The government have also outlined current issues and guidance. Please visit: <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>

The NHS have a comprehensive list of support organisations for both adults and children. Please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>

Like many of you, I was impressed with the way poet Amanda Gorman read her poem, 'The hills we climb' at President Biden's inauguration, earlier this month. The strong sense of absolute belief in being able to influence and change the future for the better came across strongly. It certainly echoes the feedback and sentiments of our pupils in school who, continually through these challenging times, are clear that things will get better and who show a strong sense of purpose, as well as resilience in the way they are responding to the challenge of the Covid pandemic.

As we move into spring and the longer days return, the optimism of youth, supported by teachers and families, provides both the reassurance that we will see our way through the pandemic and that step-by-step we are doing what we can, together, to return to our normal lives and routines.

'The new dawn blooms as we free it, for there is always light
If only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it.'

Amanda Gorman: born 1998, American poet and activist.

Thank you for your continued support for the work of the school.

Very best wishes

Yours sincerely

T Griffiths
Headteacher

As a school, we all need to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean our hands more often using soap and water as well as the hand sanitiser found in all classrooms and social spaces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have good respiratory hygiene habits: 'Catch it, bin it, kill it'. Use the tissues and bins provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the year group 'bubble' systems and stay in your dedicated areas as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not enter the 2-metre teaching areas as marked out in classrooms during lessons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the year group specific entrance/exit to enter and leave school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow instructions from all adults quickly and sensibly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not attend school and follow public health advice if we have any symptoms of coronavirus.