

25 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, can I thank you all for the many messages of support at this difficult time for all of us. Even though the school is closed to the vast majority of students we are still very much a community, and your support is very much appreciated. I am writing to you today to update you on the school's position as we continue to work to support our learners at this difficult and challenging time.

I would like to thank all parents and our students for all the work that you are completing, either working on it on Show My Homework, or sending work in via email.

**You are all doing a truly amazing job!**

However, can I urge parents to contact the school with any concerns and questions, rather than take to social media. We have seen several instances of parents asking questions on social media, and although people have answered in good faith these replies have not been correct and this can lead to anxiety for both parents and students.

Please note that we have made sure that there will be a school leader on site every day to take messages off the office computer and phone, so that we can respond to parents.

We are working under very difficult circumstances and doing the best we can, any parent who submits a query will get a response, it may not be immediate but a response will follow within 48 hours.

I would like to take this opportunity to also reassure parents that the aim of the school setting work is for students to complete as much as possible, but not necessarily all work.

Over the first few days of closure there have inevitably been many questions raised, particularly about the work being set. I hope to be able to answer some of these questions now, and to reassure both parents and students. Could I please ask that if there are any further questions that these are directed to the school using the email address: [GilesParents@gilesacademy.co.uk](mailto:GilesParents@gilesacademy.co.uk).

***The work is taking my child far longer than I expected – will they get in trouble for not completing all of the work?***

The simple answer is no they won't get in trouble. We would ask you to bear with us on this – teachers are very experienced at planning a 50 minute lesson in school. However, all students work at different speeds and in school the teacher manages the situation and keeps the class at a similar place in the work. This is very difficult to manage when setting work remotely, and I know that staff have been keen to ensure that there is always more than enough work set. A very simple guideline for students is to **spend 50 minutes on a lesson and then stop**. Any starter tasks set by a teacher should not take more than 15 minutes, so similarly they should move on.

### ***How much input do I need to make as a parent?***

It is only natural to want to help your child, particularly those parents who now find themselves working at home themselves. However, the tasks set for students are designed for them to be able to work through independently. Teachers are commonly including Powerpoint lessons or links to online lessons that talk the students through the work. Teachers are also monitoring Show My Homework throughout the day and responding to any questions about the work that students may have. One positive that may come out of this crisis is that our students are becoming fantastic independent learners which will benefit them greatly in years to come.

### ***The school is staying open over Easter – will teachers still be setting work?***

We have considered this question at great length. We will NOT be setting any additional work over Easter. We appreciate that although students and families are now at home this was a time of holiday and many families will want to maintain a break from work albeit in very unusual circumstances. If students want to continue to do school work, then there will undoubtedly be plenty to finish off and catch up on from the work currently being set. For the students that do have to come into school during the Easter holidays the staff will give them some time to work if they wish but this will not be the focus of their time in school.

I hope that this will go some way to alleviating any concerns that you may have had about the work. Please do share this information with your child, particularly in relation to the first query as we do not want any students feeling overwhelmed or stressed by the work. The questions above have been the most common queries, but there will undoubtedly be others. As mentioned above, please use the email address [GilesParents@gilesacademy.co.uk](mailto:GilesParents@gilesacademy.co.uk) and we will do our best to provide answers promptly.

Yours sincerely



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