

gilesacademy

7 May 2020

Dear Parents / Carers; Students and Staff;

I hope this week finds everyone safe and well?

As it is VE Day on Friday 8 May, which will mark 75 years since the end of the war in Europe, I am sending my weekly update a day early and have taken the decision to close the school on this day as a mark of respect for both VE Day and for the amazing key workers. We would obviously want to stay open on Friday if required, as we gave a commitment to open every day until 21 July 2020 during this challenging time, but we have not got any students booked into school on Friday and so it seems an appropriate action to take.

I have said many times that we have been overwhelmed by the commitment of our staff and the dedication of our students to their work, but to continue with work on Friday in what has become over the past few weeks the new 'normal way' for us all, does not seem appropriate. We are constantly thinking about the wellbeing of our students and so have decided that it is more appropriate for there to be no work set on Friday 08 May – VE Day. Instead this day will provide an opportunity for students to have some time for 'catch up' if they want or need to complete work ... or instead and very importantly, to have time to exercise; time with family; time to do something appropriate to mark VE Day!

The leadership team have again been working this week to continue a number of meetings looking at the school's approach to bringing students back when the time is right, which will include a thorough risk assessment. We understand the frustration expressed by some parents / carers and students about not knowing when we can return to school, but we need to follow Government guidance very carefully to keep everyone safe and we are hoping that we may find out more details about a way forward for schools on Sunday when it is anticipated that the Government may share their 'road map' and plans for the future and we will follow any guidance offered by them. I am sure our parents / carers will show us their support for plans we adopt and put trust in the fact that we only ever want to make the best decisions for all our learners.

Also this week, many students have been taking part in the SLATrust ART Competition ... there are some very talented young people and the entries are fantastic. Remember that the focus is on having FUN! I am sure we will get a few more entries being submitted before the deadline. All details are available on the school website.

As you will be aware, Giles Academy wants to offer the best care; guidance and support to our students. The pastoral care and welfare of our young people is extremely important to us all and as this period of lockdown continues, can we take this opportunity to again remind all parents / carers and students that there is advice on our school website to support our young people and also that we have leadership and pastoral staff available on call at all times to respond to emails enquiries; advice and support ... and to share student successes with. We want all our students to know that they are fully supported at this challenging time ... they just need to contact the school and an email or phone call will promptly follow.

This care and support the school can offer includes the careers advice and guidance we are available for. The careers team have the newly set up Destinations email tab in order to respond to all queries promptly and to provide detailed advice for all our young people, in particular for Year 11 & 13 but also for the important UCAS; apprenticeship and future learning & careers advice for Year 12.

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Finally, can I thank all parents / carers; students and staff again for all your hard work and the dedication shown to learning. I am even pleased to report that we have now been approached by a few parents regarding advice for getting into teaching and if this is something anyone would be interested in, please just drop an informal email to the school and we will direct your enquiry to the right person.

I am excited to say that next week's update on Friday 15 May will include a 'feature' from Mrs Pell – Assistant Headteacher, who is keen to pass on her best wishes to our young people.

I hope that all our Giles Academy families remain safe and well over the coming week, please contact the school at any time.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Belcher', written in a cursive style.

Katie Belcher
Deputy Headteacher