

5 JUNE 2020

Dear Parents / Carers; Students and Staff,

We hope that everyone is well and staying safe following the half term break?

The start of Term 6 has been particularly busy as we prepare for Year 10 and 12 to return for some face to face contact to support their learning by getting the school site and environment ready. We have written separately to the students and parents / carers in these year groups, to share the details of what this partial re-opening of Giles Academy will look like, with these letters going out early next week. We are very much looking forward to welcoming the majority of Year 10 and 12 students back, albeit under the necessary Health and Safety measures alongside the children of key workers.

Over the half term break the Government made some significant changes to how we can bring Year 10 and 12 back into school. We were expecting and would have certainly liked to have been able to offer to bring back all Year 10 and 12, but we have now had to adapt certain aspects of our plans to meet the latest guidelines that were published over the half term break, which stipulate that we can only have a maximum 25% of Years 10 and 12 attending school at any one time, which limits us at Giles Academy to a maximum of 60 students.

We are pleased to say that we are ready to have students returning, we are strongly encouraging our students back and I see that it will be extremely good for both learning and to promote positive mental health, but with the staff and student wellbeing and safety at the forefront of everything we do. However, we have also communicated to all our Year 10 and 12 families that it is extremely important for no student to be discriminated against for not attending school. We understand that all family and individual student circumstances are different and the decision to send children back to school is one that all families will be struggling to make, and we have reassured parents / carers and our students that we will support the decisions made, which is why work covered in school will also be uploaded to Show My Homework / email and remote learning provision will continue for Year 10 and 12.

For Key Stage 3 students, we have now embarked on Term 6 with a revised way of working, which will allow students to enjoy more variety in their learning. We are pleased to say that this approach has received some positive feedback and we have seen some interesting things taking place this week.

We feel very sad that, for our Key Stage 3 students, they will not experience school 'as normal' for the rest of this academic year and we would like all our fantastic students to know that we are already working hard on their behalf in school to not only plan their work and feedback for Term 6, but also for the next academic year, so that any gaps in knowledge can be effectively assessed and bridged.

We will certainly miss seeing the Key Stage 3 students in school this term and we hugely thank all those students who send the leadership team and the rest of staff emails, pictures, recorded songs and messages to keep in touch ... which certainly brings a huge smile to our faces!

One way to support our students and parents / carers to feel connected to the school was to enter the SLATrust Art Competition and I am pleased to share that the responses to this project was overwhelmingly positive, with a large number of entries from all schools from students and parents. All of these entries have been judged and a presentation of all entries, including winning art work, will be shared on the website of all schools and shared via Facebook, early next week. Those winners and runner up entries will be contacted and their prizes of art packs and goodies will be posted ... we were all very impressed but are sworn to secrecy until the official announcement!

This week we have seen a lot of course work being completed by our lovely students, and we would like to thank all of our parents / carers again ... you are all doing such a fabulous job in supporting all our students from home and it is very appreciated. We are pleased that this experience has encouraged some parents / carers to explore a career in teaching or working in school and we will be in touch in the coming weeks to discuss this with all those who have enquired about this.

Finally, we have had parents / carers contacting us about arrangements in school and please remember that we are here to answer any questions at all, with senior staff, some teachers and pastoral support staff in school every day to work with our families in offering any support needed, please contact us by using the office or gilesparents@gilesacademy.co.uk email tab.

Thank you again ... stay safe ... kind regards,

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

Katie Belcher
Deputy Headteacher